WORLD / A20

Mexico polls: Rival candidates claim victory

ACROSS / A13

MILF declares ceasefire in Maguindanao

BUSINESS / B6

RP moves to plug finance pipelines of terror groups

NEWS / A6

PCGG remains hopeful of striking compromise deal with Marcoses

Sex, soccer don't mix very well in Germany

KUNG SAMALAMIG PA YAN...

BERLIN—TO THE LIST of pernicious things that have not happened at this World Cup, add one more—a spike in the sex trade.

All the talk before the World Cup about mobile

SEX/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, July 4, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 206 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Most endangered crocodiles found in RP

By Blanche S. Rivera

WILL THE PHILIPPINES SOON LOSE ALL ITS "*buwaya*"?

The indigenous Philippine crocodile has been declared by the Australia-based Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) the most endangered species of crocodile in the world.

MOST/ A15

Borra says he's ready to face impeach raps

BORRA: Victim of circumstances?

'Why am I singled out? This is lamentable'

By Jerome Aning, Leila B. Salaverria and Michael Lim Ubac

ELECTION COMMISSIONER Resurreccion Borra is angry at the Office of the Ombudsman's findings that the House of Representatives could use to open impeachment proceedings against him for his role in the anomalous P1.3-billion poll automation contract.

"My position is [that] I'm a victim of circumstances and I'm ready to face any charge and defend myself because I know [that] I have not done anything wrong in this project," Borra said in an ambush interview yesterday.

The Supreme Court voided the contract in January 2004, saying the Commission on Elections had disregarded the law and its bidding procedures.

On Friday, the Office of the Ombudsman said Borra was liable for allowing the bids and awards committee of the Comelec to declare Mega Pacific consortium eligible to take part in the bidding for the automation project.

Borra also allowed material deviations from the bidding requirements and recommended that the award be given to Mega Pacific despite its "ineligibility and technical failure," the Ombudsman said.

The Ombudsman ordered the dismissal of five members of the Comelec bids and awards committee for authorizing the purchase of automated counting machines from Mega Pacific.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and the rest of the commissioners who approved the award of the project to Mega Pacific

BORRA/ A15

A JUBILANT President Macapagal-Arroyo raises the hands of boxing champions Manny Pacquiao and Jimrex Jaca, who defeated their Mexican foes on Sunday.

LYN RILLON

Pacquiao gets Palace Hall of Fame award

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Tina G. Santos

BOXING SENSATION MANNY Pacquiao yesterday became the first Filipino to be enshrined in Malacañang's version of the Hall of Fame honoring the country's bold and beautiful—the sportsmen and the beauty queens.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the millionaire prizefighter the honor by conferring on him the Order of Lakandula with the rank of "Champion for Life."

Executive Order No. 540 creating the new rank in the 3-year-old Honors Code system, also named Miss International 2005 Precious Lara Quigaman, the Southeast Asia Games gold medalists and the Mount Everest conquerors as initial recipients of the title "Champion for Life."

But Pacquiao was the first—and, so far, the only one—to have actually received the award.

The honor was Ms Arroyo's gift to Pacquiao, who came to the Palace like a conquering hero for the second time in six months, after he vanquished Mexican boxer Oscar Larios in 12 rounds at the Araneta Coliseum Sunday.

PACQUIAO/ A15

PCGG: No deal with victims on US award

By Alcuin Papa

IT'S NO DEAL.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) has rejected any compromise agreement on a $35-million account in the United States with victims of human rights violations during the Marcos regime.

PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio yesterday said any deal with the victims would relinquish the country's right to sovereign immunity under international law.

The doctrine of "sovereign immunity" provides that the government cannot commit a legal wrong and is immune from civil suit or criminal prosecution.

The PCGG is tasked with recovering Marcos' alleged ill-gotten wealth.

Judge Manuel Real of the US District Court in Hawaii authorized on June 27 compensation of $2,000 each to about 7,500 victims of human rights, but no immediate payment can be made because the move had been blocked by the PCGG.

Last month, the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals awarded to the

PCGG/ A4

Malacañang, bishops tangle anew on impeachment case

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY TOLD the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines that opposition moves to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo were nothing more than "plain and simple political harassment" that should not concern prelates.

Fourteen human rights activists yesterday signed the opposition's impeachment complaint in what leftist Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño said was the start of a move to enlist signatures in the next three weeks to the citizen-led initiative to be filed on July 24 at Congress' reopening.

Among those who signed the complaint were Nicanor Briones, leader of the National Federation of Sugar Workers in Bulacan who narrowly escaped an assassination attempt; Camarines Sur activist Jariz Vida, whose brother survived an ambush; and Alberto Ramirez, a farmer who claimed to have witnessed the kidnapping allegedly by the military of University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño and Shirlyn Cadapan.

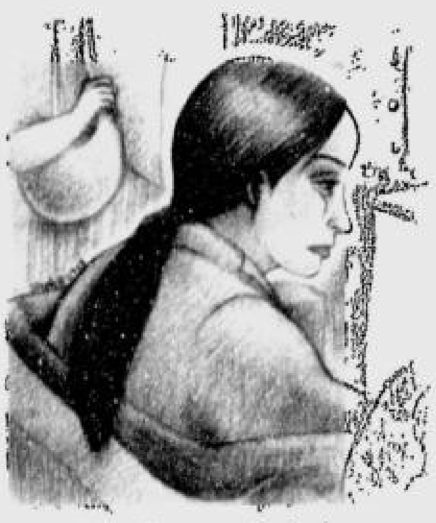
Last week, four impeachment complaints were filed in the House of Representatives as part of a serial effort by the opposition to avoid dismissal of its charges on a technicality because it did not know exactly when the one-year period to bring a case against the President began.

The Constitution only allows

MALACAÑANG/ A15

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FOREIGN Secretary Romulo and US Ambassador Kenney open the Philippine-American Friendship Garden on the US Embassy grounds.



ANNA Liza Franco waits for her cross-examination, as sketched by INQUIRER artist Steph Bravo.

'Nicole' readies for big day

By Volt Contreras

AS "NICOLE" PREPARES FOR HER FIRST PUBLIC confrontation with her alleged rapists on Thursday, the four accused American Marines will have a "small party" to mark US Independence Day today.

The Makati City Regional Trial Court has approved a motion by the soldiers' Filipino lawyers to hold no hearing today since the US Embassy would be on holiday for the Fourth of July. The embassy acts as custodian of the four.

"Let them enjoy their Independence Day," said Francisco Rodrigo, counsel for S/Sgt. Chad Carpentier. He said the defense lawyers would take advantage of the one-day break in the trial to confer with their clients at the embassy today.

"We'll have a small party. We'll go there and talk with them," Jose Justiniano, lawyer for Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood, told the INQUIRER when asked if he, too, had Fourth of July plans with his client.

The Subic rape trial is being heard at the sala of Judge Benjamin Pozon every weekday except Wednesdays.

Private Prosecutor Evalyn Ursua told the court the prosecution would finally present

'NICOLE'/ A4

'Time for us to move relationship forward'

By US Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney

(EDITOR'S Note: The author arrived in the Philippines on March 17, 2006. A senior US diplomat, she previously served as the US ambassador to Ecuador.)

COMMENTARY

AMERICANS AROUND THE world are celebrating today the birthday of the United States as a free and independent nation. The festivities of the Fourth of July recall the signing of the US Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, and they evoke the American people's struggle for self-determination and democracy.

Here in the Philippines, July 4 also recalls this nation's independence and the establishment of

TIME/ A4

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/07/03/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

State of RP education 'alarming'

No basic mastery of key subjects

AN "ALARMING" NUMBER OF students about to enter Philippine universities lacked a basic mastery of key subjects, while those entering high school fared only marginally better, a report said Monday.

Barely any fourth year students or sixth graders achieved the 75 percent "mastery" benchmark for mathematics, science, Filipino and English languages, and social studies, the National Statistical Coordination Board said.

While somewhat better than the 2003-2004 scores, the results of a national achievement test for the 2004-2005 school year "revealed that the quality of basic education in the country remains poor," it said in a statement.

"Science was the least of the competencies of both elementary and secondary students," the government-backed study said.

"Only one out of five grade six pupils and one out of 200 fourth year students had acquired mastery of the required education competencies for their respective grade/year levels," the report said.

"It is alarming to note that there were barely any fourth year students with mastery of Filipino, while for Science, there were only 1.8 percent students with the required mastery."

Those belonging to smaller classes and who had more textbooks "performed slightly better" than those belonging to classes with 91-100 pupils.

The agency said the study was similar to the results of a 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

Filipino fourth-graders in that study ranked third last in both math and science among 25 countries, while second-year Filipino high school students ranked 41st in math and 42nd in science among 45 countries tested.

AFP

GOOD COPS

INQUIRER Publisher Isagani Yambot, center, welcomes the Country's Outstanding Policemen in the Service (COPS) of 2006. The outstanding police officers visited the INQUIRER yesterday. At right is Aniceto M. Sobrepeña, president of the Metrobank Foundation Inc. which sponsored the search for the outstanding police officers.

ERIK ARAZAS

Cases of infectious diseases drop by 51%

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE COUNTRY HAS REGISTERED a 51.4-percent decline in reported cases of infectious diseases like dengue, malaria, and meningococcemia, during the first half of the year, according to the Department of Health.

From January to June, there were only 6,461 infectious cases reported compared with the 13,299 cases registered during the same period last year, according to the Disease Surveillance Summary Report of the DOH's National Epidemiology Center.

The reduction came largely because there were less dengue incidents reported during the period, Dr. Eric Tayag, the government's chief epidemiologist, told the INQUIRER.

"And this is because the country isn't ripe for another dengue outbreak this year," he said, explaining that the mosquito-borne disease attacks on a three-year cycle.

The last attack was in 2005 when more than 20,000 cases were reported around the country. Tayag said the next one was expected in 2008.

This year, he said the dengue strain most likely present in the country was similar to the one that surfaced in 2005. He said new infections come when another one of four dengue strains attacks.

During the first six months this year, there were only 4,992 dengue cases reported, a 51.4-percent reduction compared with the 10,282 cases registered during the same period in 2005.

The National Epidemiology Center also reported a drop in meningococcemia cases by 88.4 percent, from 353 in January-June 2005 to only 41 this year.

Tayag credited the decline to the successful effort against the disease particularly in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Cases of measles were also down by 85.5 percent, from 110 cases in 2005 to only 16 this year. So were malaria incidents which dropped by 71.3 percent, from 1,165 to 334.

Hepatitis B was also down by 46.6 percent, from 221 to 118, and typhoid fever by 42.9 percent, from 212 to 121.

A blot in the latest report on infectious diseases came from leptospirosis, a disease contacted rat's urine. Leptospirosis incidents increased by 92 percent, from 89 to 171.

Tayag said the increase was brought about by flooding during which people with open wounds were exposed to the disease.

"It's also because we have a more efficient reporting system nowadays and people are more aware of the disease," he said.

Strong typhoon threatens country

By Blanche S. Rivera

DESPITE THE NEARLY SCORCHING heat in most of Luzon, a typhoon ushered in the month of July, dubbed by the weather bureau as the peak of the rainy season in the country.

Typhoon "Ester" (international name Ewiniar) entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility yesterday, packing winds of 120 kph and gustiness of up to 150 kph.

Based on satellite images, it was located at 1,000 km from northern Samar, moving northwest at 9 kph, according to the Philippine Atmospheric geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

"It's still too far to affect the Philippines, but if it continues moving northwest, we can expect rains by Thursday or Friday. We can have a wet weekend," Pagasa weather branch chief Nathaniel Cruz said in a phone interview.

Based on its current direction, the typhoon is not expected to hit any Philippine land mass, but it can still change its course in the next 24 to 36 hours, he said.

"It's gaining strength as it approaches the Philippines… We're lucky that it will not hit us," Cruz said, adding there was very little chance that the typhoon would bring rains to Metro Manila.

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At the inauguration, the Hon. Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment and Guest of Honor cuts the ceremonial ribbon assisted by Mrs. Mercedes F. Oca, wife of AMOSUP President, Capt. Gregorio S. Oca. Also in picture are from left, Dr. Roudel Rebong, Ophthalmologist; Dr. Ramon Reyes, Cardiologist; Dr. Luis V. Vizcarra, Medical Director; Capt. Gregorio S. Oca; Mr. Juju Evangelista, Sales Director of PMSI; and Dr. Conrado F. Oca, Hospital Administrator. Also in picture is Dr. Eduardo Nievera, Radiologist (partially hidden).

TOSHIBA

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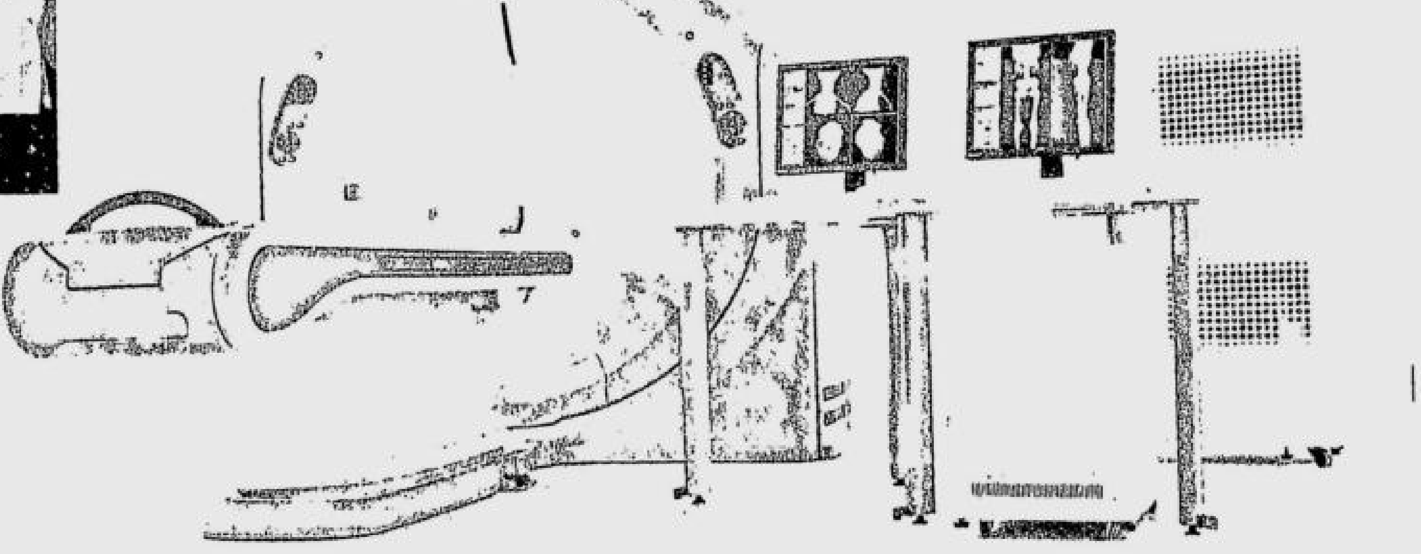

With the recent purchase of the Toshiba Aquilion 64 slice CT Scanner, the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) continues its pursuit to provide its members and dependents with world-class quality medical service.

At the highest level in the Philippines when it comes to CT scanners, the Toshiba Aquilion 64 slice CT Scanner boasts of many superior features:

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The Toshiba Aquilion 64 has been designed for easy and fast workflow. Automated features, such as "SURECardio", enable the operator to monitor the heart rate of a patient prior to the actual scanning. The Toshiba Aquilion 64 will automatically set the optimal scanning conditions. This assures the best possible image-quality of the heart in any patient and largely facilitates operator interventions. Diagnostic outcome has never been more certain as today with the Aquilion 64.

With the leadership of Capt. Gregorio S. Oca of AMOSUP, the acquistion of the Toshiba Aquilion 64 brings him one step closer to his vision to provide world-class medical care for every member of AMOSUP and its dependents.

From left. Dr. Conrado F. Oca, Hospital Administrator; Capt. Gregorio S. Oca, President of AMOSUP; Hon. Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment; Mrs. Mercedes F. Oca; and Dr. Luis V. Vizcarra, Medical Director.

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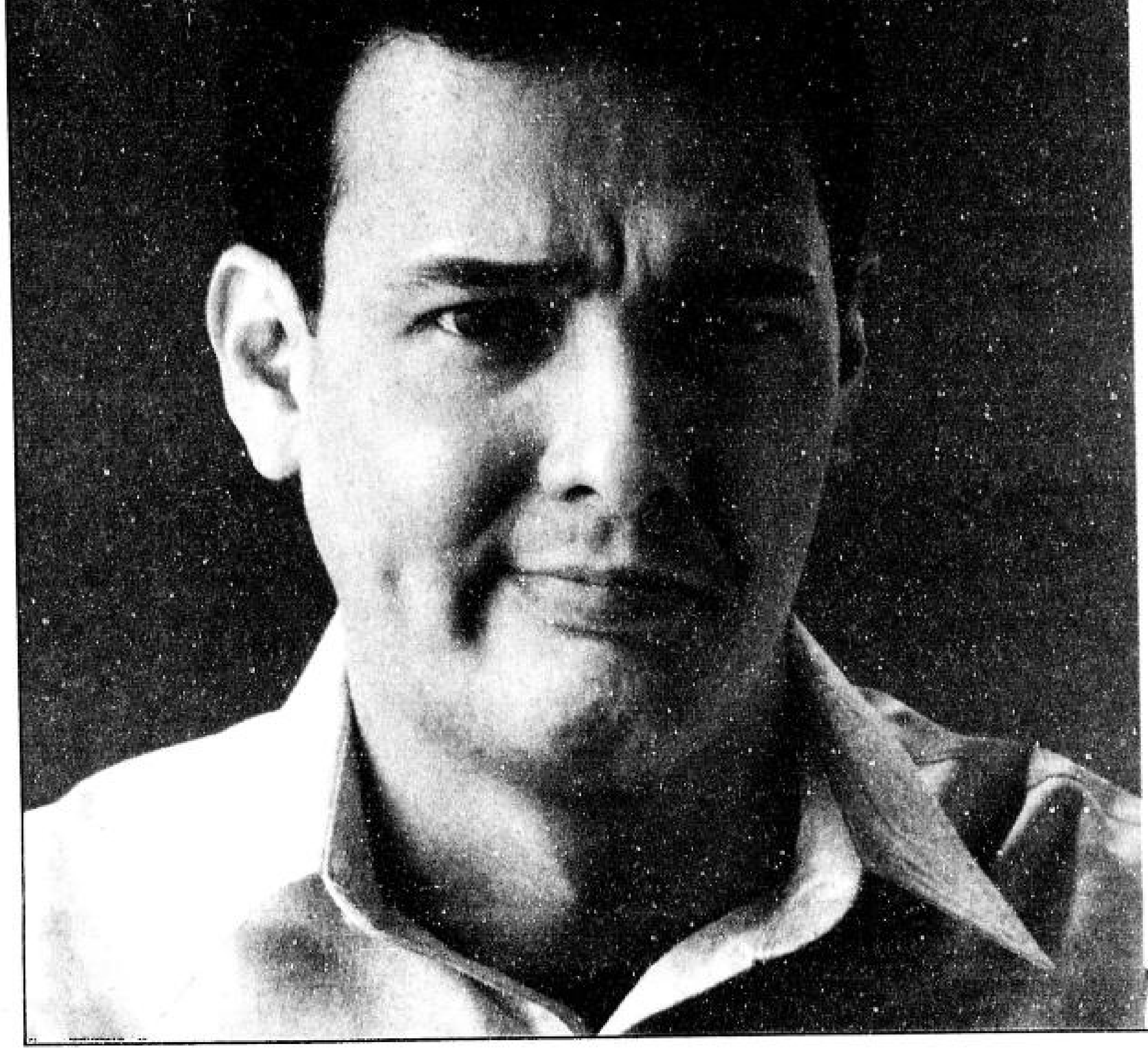

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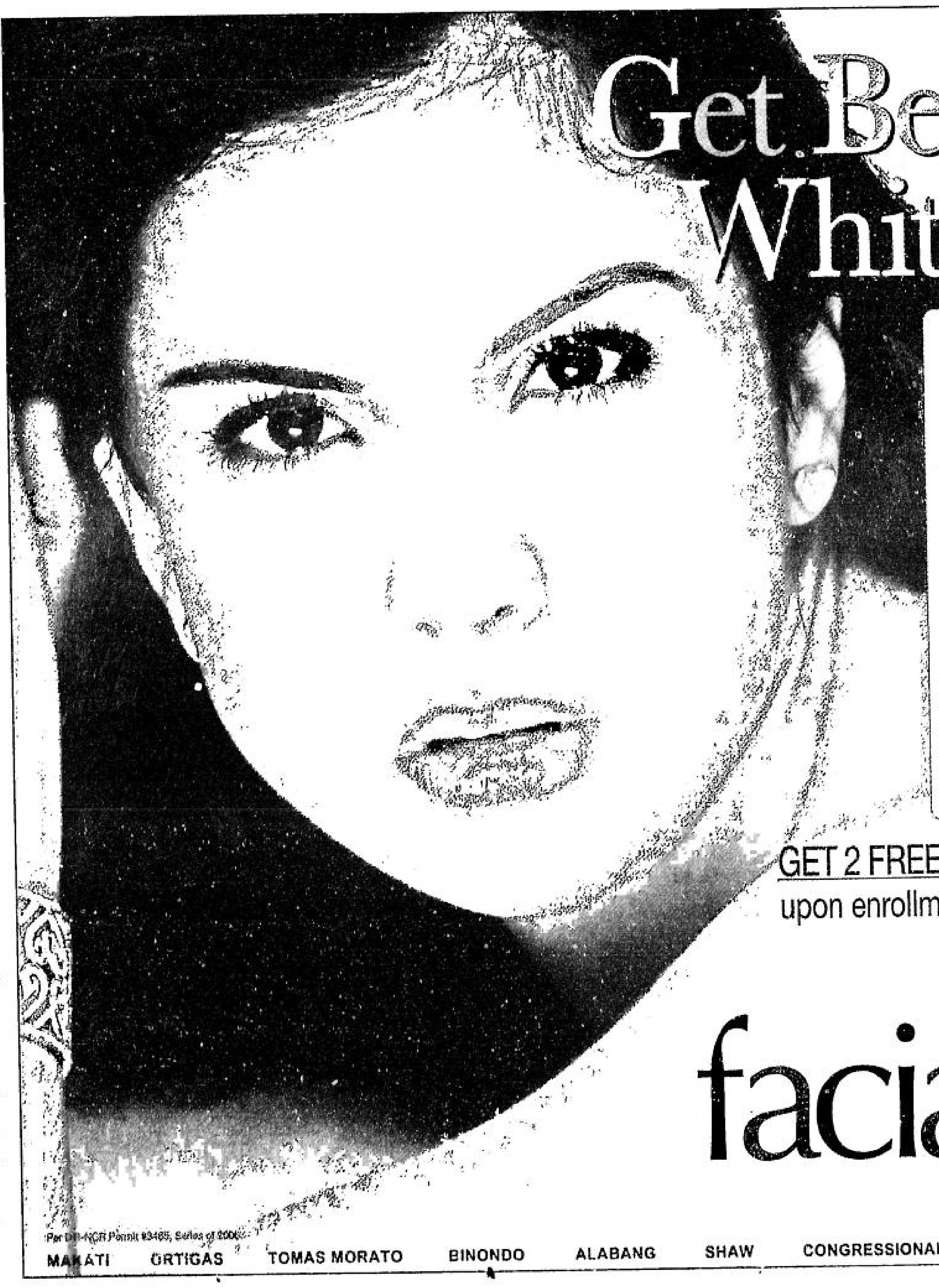

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PCGG: No deal with victims on $35M US award

From page A1

victims $35 million in a New York brokerage account that once belonged to Marcos.

The Philippine government has claimed the money belonged to its treasury, but the US appeals court said it had no legal right to the account, which Marcos opened in 1972 with a $2-million deposit.

The government, however, filed a petition for rehearing and obtained a stay order from the appeals court last week.

Party-list Rep. Etta Rosales of Akbayan, a member of Claimants 1081 that filed the rights cases in 1986 in Hawaii, said she felt bad that the PCGG decided to block the initial award.

"I hope the PCGG will realize that the bulk of these victims are poor people. No matter how small, material justice can help," Rosales said last week.

Reacting to the court order blocking the payment, Robert Swift, the American lead lawyer for the victims, said: "It is a tragedy that the government wants to prevent the poorest of its citizens from recovering for brutal human rights violations."

At a press conference, Sabio said the consequences of giving up the country's sovereign immunity would be incalculable.

Graft charges

Because a deal with the victims would be "grossly disadvantageous to government," any PCGG official who took part in it "would open himself to graft charges whether or not he would profit thereby," Sabio said.

Besides, the funds from which the compensation would be taken "are indisputably belonging to the government" based on a July 16, 2003, ruling of the Supreme Court. The ruling awarded some $650 million in frozen Swiss Marcos bank accounts to the government.

On Feb. 3, 1995, Judge Real awarded a $2-billion judgment to victims of the Marcos regime.

Arelma foundation

Part of the amount was to be taken out of a Merrill Lynch account totaling $35 million under the Arelma Foundation, a dummy corporation formed by the Marcoses sometime in 1972.

Merrill Lynch asked the court to resolve the claims on the money. Besides the human rights victims, other claimants include the Arelma Foundation, the Philippine National Bank and the estate of Roger Roxas.

In the "remote" event that the decision of the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals would be unfavorable to the PCGG, Sabio said the commission would bring the matter to the United States Federal Supreme Court.

"When you submit the compromise agreement to Judge Real, we are submitting to the jurisdiction and authority of the US district court, and we are immune. The US district court has no power over the Republic of the Philippines, unless it does (relinquish its immunity) so voluntarily," Sabio said.

Up to Congress

The PCGG chair said he was for the granting of just compensation to the victims of the Marcos regime but the determination of who the victims were and the just compensation for them should be done by the Philippine Congress and courts.

Sabio related that he found it "very difficult" to take his current position on the issue, saying he made a vow when he was a young lawyer to take the side of the "poor and the oppressed."

"We would like the Philippine Congress and the Supreme Court to determine this matter. The bill in Congress provides for the process which the human rights victims can be identified. We should not submit to the jurisdiction of the US court," Sabio said, referring to a bill in Congress that would allocate P8 billion for the victims.

Bills seeking to indemnify the human rights victims have been stuck in the House of Representatives whose members include a daughter of Marcos and her supporters.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has said she will support legislation to set aside a certain amount of the money as compensation for victims of human rights violations under Marcos.

Since 1986, the government has recovered a total of P60.8 billion in ill-gotten wealth from the Marcoses and their cronies, according to the PCGG.

Under Republic Act No. 6657, or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, all ill-gotten wealth recovered from the Marcoses should be spent on land reform.

'Nicole' readies for 'big day'

From page A1

the 22-year-old Filipino complainant on Thursday.

A big day

Talking with the INQUIRER, Ursua said Thursday's hearing would be "a big day for Nicole."

She said the complainant was being prepared emotionally and psychologically by her therapists for the expectedly gruelling sessions.

Nicole, who hails from Zamboanga City, has only missed one hearing since the trial began on June 2.

Shielded from the media glare by female supporters, anti-US activists, and members of her family, Nicole broke down in tears or walked out of the courtroom distraught during the first few hearings.

A glance away

In each court appearance, Nicole always found herself a few seats away from Silkwood, Carpentier and the two other accused, Lance Corporals Dominic Duplantis and Daniel Smith.

At yesterday's hearing, the public prosecutors represented by Elizabeth Berdal told Pozon they were allowing the general public to watch Nicole's testimony.

Ursua later maintained, however, that "there may be parts" in Nicole's narrative of the alleged rape which prosecutors would want delivered in a closed-door hearing.

Earlier than planned

"We will inform the court at the proper time," she said.

Nicole's expected testimony on Thursday was earlier than initially planned.

Previously, prosecutors said they would only call Nicole after a leading forensic pathologist, Dr. Raquel Fortun, had finished her testimony as an expert witness. But completion of Fortun's testimony has been delayed by defense questions about her credentials.

Pozon has yet to rule on whether to admit Fortun as an expert witness and allow her to give her opinion on the medical findings on Nicole.

More witnesses

Ursua also reported to the court yesterday that Fortun might not be available on Thursday.

Nicole "will not be our last witness," Ursua clarified to reporters, saying there might be at least five to six more witnesses before the prosecution would rest its case.

She said these included Fortun; medico-legal officer Rolando Ortiz; a forensic psychologist, and a toxicologist.

Ortiz already testified last week but might be recalled to the stand if the judge granted a defense motion to further grill him on Nicole's sexual "history," a matter which Ortiz then held confidential.

Controversial Soriano

The lawyer said the prosecution might also call Timoteo Soriano, the controversial Filipino driver of the hired van, where Nicole was allegedly raped by Smith as the other Marines cheered him on on the night of Nov. 1, 2005 at the Subic Bay Freeport.

Ursua deferred comment when asked if the prosecution had gotten hold of Soriano who, months before the trial, recanted his statement which supported the rape charge. He then claimed a Subic investigator coerced him into signing the document.

Yesterday's hearing only took just about an hour, with the defense panel finishing its cross-examination of prosecution witness Anna Liza Franco, Nicole's stepsister.

Weight and waistline

Pozon adjourned the proceedings three hours early for lack of other scheduled witnesses.

Though brief, the hearing was not short on colorful exchanges.

At one point, Franco was asked by defense lawyer Enrico Uyehara to recall Nicole's "weight" and "waistline" on the night of the alleged rape.

"This is relevant," the counsel for Duplantis insisted, after Ursua wondered aloud what those vital statistics had to do with the case.

It turned out that Uyehara sought to establish Nicole's body mass since, according to him, there was a relation between "the effect of alcohol" and the drinker's weight.

Size of the pizza

Ursua said she would agree to the query about the weight but not to that about the waistline.

Uyehara even asked Franco to recall the kind and size of "pizza" which she and Nicole ate before going to the Neptune Club, where they had alcoholic drinks and met the accused soldiers on the dance floor.

Prosecutors contend that Nicole got too drunk at the Neptune to have later consented to sex with Smith. The defense, on the other hand, has been grilling witnesses to establish she was sober enough to have consented.

JUNK VFA!
JAIL THE YANKEES! -GABRIELA
FRIENDS

TWISTED TIES? A member of a militant women's group attends a press conference to denounce a "twisted" kind of friendship between the Philippines and the United States, citing as example the ongoing Subic rape case trial.

JOAN BONDOC

'Time for us to move relationship forward'

From page A1

one of our most important relationships—that of the American and Filipino peoples as close friends and full partners from independent but closely intertwined free and democratic nations.

So today—July 4, 2006—we celebrate not only the Independence Day of the United States, but also the 60th anniversary of Philippine-American Friendship Day. *(See related story on Page A6.)*

On July 4, 1946, the United States returned full leadership of the Republic of the Philippines to the Filipino people, initiating 60 years of a cooperative partnership between our two nations based on the deep respect and intense ties we fashioned over many years, including fighting side by side during World War II, as well as during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

For the past six decades, our bilateral relationship has been like a ladder—presenting myriad opportunities to climb further upward and take new steps toward an expanded partnership as the Philippines matured into a stable, established democracy.

Endless possibility

My travels here have shown me the Philippines is a land of endless possibility, from its bountiful waters to its evergreen hills, from its bucolic beauty to its urban bustle. Naturally enough, any nation's most valuable resource is its people. In this regard, the Philippines is blessed by millions of energetic, dynamic citizens.

I've felt the warmth of Filipino-American friendship and seen the results of the talent, hard work, and intelligence of Filipinos, from dedicated teachers at the Ayala Foundation's Centex school in Tondo to brave veterans honoring their fallen comrades at Mt. Samat, to health clinic workers using their skills to save lives in Jolo, to businessmen creating jobs for their countrymen in Cebu. These are the everyday heroes whose efforts help the country grow and succeed.

The American people have steadily supported this growth in all sectors of society through programs, such as development grants to build infrastructure for local governments, job training for out-of-school youth and former combatants, loans for small businesses, US Peace Corps volunteers, transformational programs for the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to improve security and their ability to combat terrorism and other threats, funding for improved healthcare, expansion of antitrafficking in persons programs, and funding to ensure sustainable farming.

As befits our close relationship, the United States is the Philippines' largest aid grantor, top foreign investor, and number one trading partner.

Now, standing together to celebrate the beginning of many more decades of friendship, we must be prepared to scale even higher. The new millennium has brought unheard of challenges to both our countries—indeed, to the world community.

Global partners

It is time for us to move our relationship forward, to coordinate each of our responsibilities as partners in a global neighborhood.

As the Philippines prepares to accept the high honor of chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), it is clear that today, more than ever, democratic governments are responsible not only to their own citizens but also to the global community to ensure a stable and secure environment that fosters prosperity, respects human rights, and ensures that we are leaving this world a better place for our children.

As old and close friends, we must speak with openness about the challenges facing us as individual nations, and as concerned allies both regionally and globally. We must stand together as equal partners and use our democratic institutions to fight nontraditional threats to our citizens, such as international terrorism, natural disasters, drug trafficking and global pandemics.

We must ensure that our citizens have the tools and skills to successfully challenge these evils. However, we must also recognize that this is no easy task, and we must muster all of our collective courage and commitment to fight these threats.

Our relationship has surpassed stumbling blocks over the past 60 years. But as close allies and friends, we can discuss our differences sensibly and productively when they arise.

It is indeed a sign of our strong partnership that we are always able to see beyond our disagreements; look forward instead of backward; and keep our focus on our shared goals and the promise of a bright future for our peoples.

Dedication

Moving forward to meet the challenges of the coming decades will require a dedication by both our citizens and governments to challenge themselves. A dedication to work together to prioritize goals. A dedication to tackle the roots of problems rather than solely their symptoms. A dedication to do what is best for the country and not the individual. A dedication to refrain from politics as usual when candor and vision are needed.

With the announcement of a $21-million anticorruption grant by US Millennium Challenge Corp., the American people recently showed their dedication to helping the Philippines help itself in tackling the problem of public and private corruption, which affects every Filipino citizen, yet prevents many from challenging threats to their own prosperity and security.

I've said many times since my arrival that as ambassador to the Philippines, it is my job to represent the United States in every corner of the country.

And I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet citizens from myriad cities and provinces, from Luzon to the Visayas to Mindanao, from poverty-stricken rural communities to well-off urban areas.

Confidence of Filipinos

During my travels, I have always been struck by the confidence expressed by Filipinos in the strong and close relationship our nations have. And I'm honored that so many Filipinos have shared with me their deepest hope—for peace and prosperity for their families, their towns and their country.

Their determination to move forward is inspiring, and their optimism is contagious.

But we realize that money alone can't—and won't—solve this problem. Both public and private institutions, public officials and private citizens, need to dedicate themselves to moving forward and creating a stronger democratic spirit in the Philippines so every Filipino citizen has a chance for peace and prosperity in his or her lifetime.

This requires private commitment, not just public funding. This requires personal concern more than party politics. This requires perseverance, not passing interest.

I know that the thousands of everyday heroes in the Philippines, many of whom I'm privileged to have met during my travels, will never cease trying to create peace and prosperity for their families. We can't—we won't—let them down.

Strengthening democracy

Our partnership with the Filipino people is working toward strengthening not only the Philippines' democratic institutions but also the abilities of individual families and citizens to prosper without fear of violence or victimization.

The US mission in Manila, which I am proud to lead, has nearly 30 agencies working in the Philippines in partnership with the national and local governments, nongovernment organizations and businesses:

We are dedicated to helping our Filipino friends meet the challenges of the 21st century. And we will continue to rely on our gracious, experienced and capable Filipino friends and colleagues for advice and assistance.

As we move further into the 21st century, it is my goal to help the American-Filipino relationship also move forward and reflect not only the changing times in which we live but also the maturing partnership that we cherish.

Although we share a deep history that we will continue to honor for generations to come, we must focus now on the future and the possibilities that we can together achieve for our children, our citizens and our nations.

My country is honored to join hands with our Filipino friends in this endeavor, and we are inspired by the openness and willingness of the Filipino people to partner with us as well. Happy anniversary, friends.

Sex, soccer don't mix very well in Germany

From page A1

"sex garages," multistory brothels and rampant cross-border sex trafficking may have kept a lid on the high jinks, according to people in the sex business. It may even have scared away some of the regular clientele.

While clubs have been busier than usual after games, the tournament has generated nowhere near the surge in demand for prostitution—or the influx of temporary prostitutes from Eastern Europe and Asia—that many experts predicted.

"Our business is OK, but it's not great," said Egbert Krumeich, the public relations manager for Artemis Sauna Club in Berlin. "We get 250 to 260 customers on a game day. We'd be happier getting 600 a day."

Soccer and sex, it appears, do not mix very well—even in Germany, where prostitution is legal and the World Cup organizers have pushed the slogan "A Time to Make Friends."

There are plenty of friendly fans here, most of them male and many pie-eyed by alcohol. The bad news for the sex trade is that fans would rather guzzle another beer than go looking for a prostitute.

"When clients see police at the brothels, they think that sex work is linked to crime," said Stephanie Klee, a prostitute who leads a group that lobbies for the rights of sex workers.

Regulated trade

In fact, prostitution is well-regulated in Germany, where about 400,000 people work in the sex trade.

Since 2002, prostitutes have been guaranteed the same rights as those in other industries. They must register with the authorities and pay taxes, and they receive health insurance.

Critics say this legal status emboldens traffickers to send prostitutes, often against their will, to Germany.

In its annual report on forced labor and trafficking in persons, issued just before the World Cup, the US state department described Germany as a "source, transit, and destination country" for prostitutes.

While crediting Germany's efforts to prosecute trafficking, the report said: "Due to the sheer size of the event, the potential for increased human trafficking surrounding the games remains a concern."

The German Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation said it had "no knowledge or information" about any cases of forced prostitution during the tournament, a spokesperson said. *New York Times News Service*

Correction

IN THE JUNE 28 ISSUE, a Metro story on Page A22—"MMDA launches new complaint service"—misstated the last digit of one of the cell phone numbers through which the Metro Manila Development Authority receives complaints. One of the cell phone numbers of the MMDA Multimedia-Aided Monitoring Service is 0920-9389875, not 0920-9389873.

***

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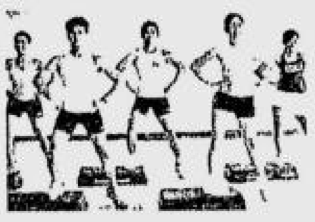

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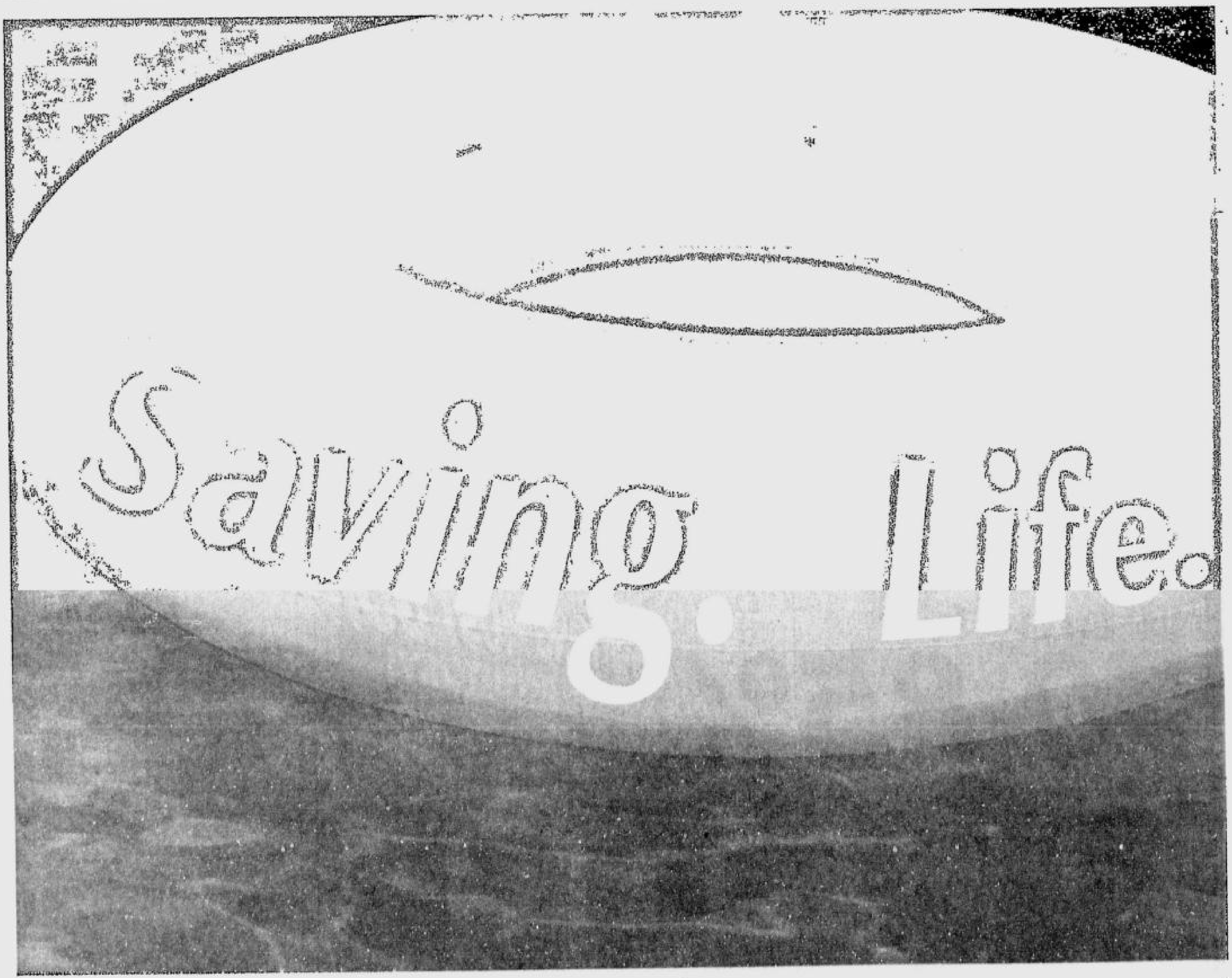

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PCGG remains hopeful of striking deal with Marcoses

By Alcuin Papa

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION on Good Government commissioner remains hopeful that it could still make a deal with the Marcoses, after former First Lady Imelda Marcos announced over the weekend that she would not enter into any compromise.

"I am sad this is her reaction. But I am still hoping. A compromise can only be reached if both sides are willing," PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said yesterday.

Abcede speculated that Marcos' statement was a reaction to negative comments about a possible deal.

Abcede had been holding "exploratory talks" with representatives of the Marcos widow on the possible dropping of 500 cases involving her and members of her family in exchange for a part of the Marcos wealth estimated to be $5 billion to $10 billion.

The first time the PCGG tried to make a deal with the Marcoses was in 1993 under former chair Magtanggol Gunigundo. This was, however, disallowed by the Supreme Court.

In a Dec. 9, 1998 decision, the high tribunal ruled that "the compromise settlement" between the PCGG and the Marcoses was illegal and void, and the stipulation to drop pending criminal cases against the Marcoses was an encroachment on judicial power.

The high court also ruled that the PCGG had no authority to compromise with the Marcoses, the principals in the ill-gotten wealth cases, nor could the commission grant tax exemptions to the Marcos family.

Abcede said he would find out if Marcos had already "closed her mind to a settlement." If she would still consider it, "we will pursue" a settlement, the PCGG commissioner said.

Abcede also had a theory that Marcos wanted to be "exonerated judicially" from all her cases. "If there was a deal, the cases would be dismissed without going through their merits. There will be no trial to find out if she is guilty or not," he said.

PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio, meanwhile, said he was taking Marcos' statements at "face value."

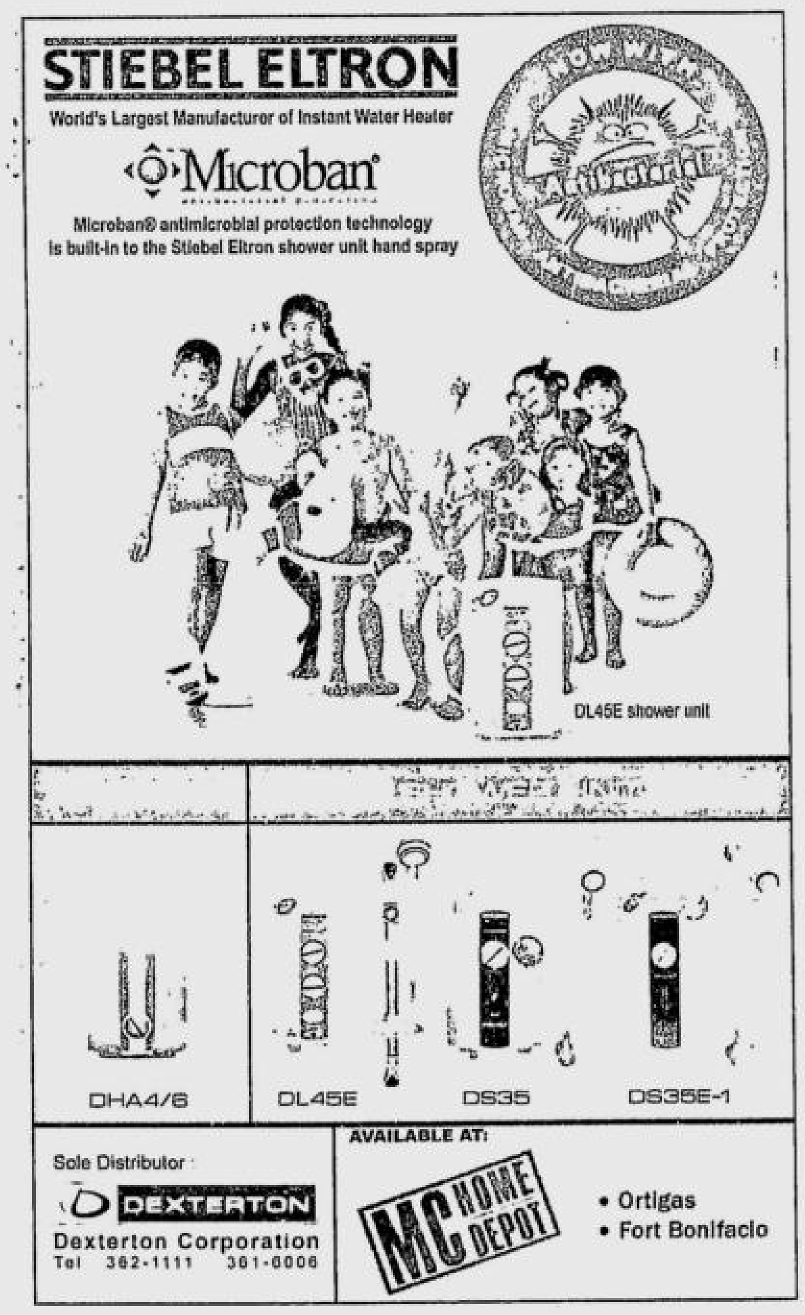
"As I've said, I have not participated in negotiations with the family of the late President Marcos. As chairman, I am open to the possibility of a compromise," Sabio said.

Robert Sison, a lawyer for Marcos, said he backed out of talks at the request of his client.

"For now, we will avoid the angle of a compromise. I can't go against the wishes of my client," Sison told the INQUIRER.

He said he would prefer to finish the cases against his client. "It should be up to the court to decide the merits of the case."

Sison also said that the talks with Abcede were only exploratory. "They never reached the level of an actual deal."



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LEADING the Philippine-American Friendship Day parade in Jersey City are, from left, Deputy Mayor Ador Equipado, Consul General Cecilia Rebong, Batangas Rep. Hermilando Mandanas and Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A FILIPINO-AMERICAN beauty waves during parade to celebrate 60 years of Philippine-American friendship in Jersey City. The June 25 festivities drew the participation of thousands of Filipino-Americans in New Jersey. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'GREAT DAY FOR GREAT FRIENDS'

Fil-Ams celebrate 60 years of friendship

By Rita Villadiego
Contributor

JERSEY CITY—UNDER A GRAY sky on June 25, Filipino-Americans here celebrated 60 years of Philippine-American friendship with a colorful parade and a concert.

"Sixty years ago, Filipinos and Americans fought against the Japanese for freedom and the years of partnership have continued. We have become great friends," said Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy.

"We should have a great day to honor our Filipino-American friends," said Healy, who joined the parade wearing a traditional *barong* Tagalog.

The mayor had proclaimed the month of June as Philippine month in Jersey City in a special ceremony few weeks ago. The Philippine flag has been flying high alongside the American flag at city hall until today.

The message of the festival was one of unity and camaraderie.

"The Filipino community has done a great job. Our relationship with the US is one which is mutually beneficial. America is helping us to improve our lives and Filipino-Americans here contribute to the economy back home," said Batangas Rep. Hermilando Mandanas, who flew in from the Philippines to attend the festivities.

Mandanas, a former Batangas governor, also paid tribute to Filipino veterans of World War II who fought side by side with American troops from 1942 to 1946.

He said Americans came to colonize the Philippines from 1899 to 1946. Since then, the two countries have nurtured a special relationship.

Thousands of Filipinos trooped to Exchange Place to join the parade and enjoy the concert.

Jazz singers led by Annie Brazil and Rachel Anne Wolfe performed songs of love and hope.

Fiipino-American Broadway star Julie Danao-Salkin ("Lennon," "Aida" and "Saturday Night Fever") belted out songs like "God Bless our Love " and "Grow Old with Me."

"I'm honored to be here. It's fantastic to perform for Filipinos," said Danao-Salkin.

The cultural group Bibak rocked the stage with ethnic dances on Filipino courtship and marriage.

"It's a milestone celebrating 60 years of friendship with America. This is our once-a-year chance to get together and show our strength as a community," said Filipino-American Ador Equipado, deputy mayor of Jersey City.

New York Consul General Cecilia Rebong said that this year, the Filipinos in the US were celebrating 100 years of immigration. Over three million Filipinos had contributed to the economic, social and political life here, she said.

Jun Hornilla, grand marshal of the parade, was elated with the success of the festival, although it rained in the afternoon.

At the waterfront, thousands of people checked out the street fair, showcasing Filipino food and souvenirs. The mood was jovial and the air was filled with the smell of barbecue.

It was a golden moment for thousands of Filipinos in Jersey City. The women glowed in their elegant Maria Claras and the men looked dashing in their embroidered *barong*.

"I'm proud growing up both American and Filipino. It's fun to join the parade on a float," said 17-year-old Erika Hughes, Miss Pafcom 2006 and daughter of Filipina-American community leader Ludy Hughes and her Irish-American husband.

Philippine-American ties in 'full bloom'

By Nikko Dizon

A GARDEN BURSTING WITH the colors of two nations' flags symbolizes 60 years of friendship between the Philippines and the United States.

Yesterday, the Philippine-American Friendship Garden on US Embassy grounds was inaugurated by Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney.

"I wanted to inaugurate something here at the embassy that will last forever," Kenney said in a statement released by the US Embassy.

"The plants are all Philippine and American plants, and they are the colors of our flags—red, white, blue, and gold. This garden reflects the living and growing relationship that we have, and it reminds us that our world is a real community of nations," added Kenney, the first female US ambassador to the Philippines.

July 4th is America's Independence Day. On this date, the Philippines also gained independence from America.

In the Philippines, July 4th has since been called Philippine-American Friendship Day.

For the 60th anniversary, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the US Embassy will hold events throughout the year.

The official celebration begins today, with the photo exhibit entitled "Partnership at 60," showcasing six decades of Philippine-American friendship and partnership will be unveiled at the DFA lobby.

Romulo and Kenney will attend the event.

Lafayette awaits gov't OK to resume operations

SYDNEY—LAFAYETTE MINING Ltd. said it was awaiting final approval to restart a copper and gold mine on Rapu-Rapu island in Albay after it was shut for pollution violations last year, pushing its shares up 9 percent.

Australia-listed Lafayette in June paid a fine of P10.4 million imposed by the Philippine government after two cyanide spills in 2005 at its Rapu-Rapu mine.

Lafayette said the Mines Rehabilitation Fund committee overseeing the mine's clean-up work had passed a resolution on June 29 confirming the company had complied with a set of pre-conditions before operations could restart.

Lafayette said two weeks ago the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources in the Philippines had verified the company's remedial environmental measures and that a temporary lifting order allowing operations to restart on a 30-day trial would be issued.

The government is pushing a revival of the mining sector to attract foreign investment and reduce poverty, but has come under pressure from influential Roman Catholic bishops voicing concerns about the environmental impact.

Lafayette, the first foreign firm to develop and run a mine in the Philippines in almost 40 years, estimates the lode will generate revenues of $350 million a year from annual production of 10,000 tons of copper in concentrates, 14,000 tons of zinc, 50,000 ounces of gold and 600,000 ounces of silver.

Lafayette shares jumped as much as 9 percent. The stock was 7 percent higher at A$0.092 by early afternoon in a flat broader market. The stock sank to a three-year low of A$0.081 in early June.

A fact-finding committee investigating the spills in October, chaired by a bishop, called for the permanent closure of Lafayette's operations, a moratorium on mining on the island and a review of the law allowing 100 percent foreign ownership of local mines.

Reuters

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, July 4, 2006
13th Week in Ordinary Time
Elizabeth of Portugal

1st Reading:	**Am 3:1-8; 4:11-12**
Gospel:	**Matthew 8:23-27**

Jesus got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning a fierce storm hit the lake, with waves sweeping the boat. But Jesus was asleep.

They woke him and cried, "Lord save us! We are lost!" But Jesus answered, "Why are you so afraid, you of little faith?" Then he stood up and ordered the wind and sea; and it became completely calm.

The people were astonished. They said, "What kind of man is he? Even the winds and the sea obey him."

Commentary

God is crying out in the voice of Amos that his people refuse to listen to him no matter what he does or what happens to them. Even though he has favored them since the beginning, it makes no difference. Now "prepare to meet your God, O Israel." This is the cry of every prophet in every age, including our own.

Jesus is in the boat with his disciples and he sleeps. A storm comes up and they panic, grabbing at him. They still do not know whose presence they live in/with. We must remember the power of Jesus that dwells with us always. And we have no reason to be afraid.

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Palace wants Senate to censure Jamby

By Christine O. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio and Leila B. Salaverria

MALACAÑANG WANTS THE SENATE TO take action on the "inappropriate action" of Sen. Jamby Madrigal, who met with Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison and other communist leaders in The Netherlands recently.

Saying that Madrigal "cannot masquerade as a peace advocate," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday urged the Senate to take punitive action on what he described as the senator's "betrayal of trust given to her by the Filipino people as an elected official."

Madrigal met last week with Sison and issued a joint communique with him that called for the resumption of peace talks between the government and the CPP-New People's Army-National Democratic Front, among others.

The communique also criticized the all-out war the government had recently declared against the NPA, stating that the military operations would only lead to "economic ruin and further escalate human rights violations."

"Her action was that of a traditional politician engaged in a dark conspiracy with the enemies of the Constitution," Bunye said in a statement. "She is straddling positions between the democratic Republic and the revolutionary left just to satisfy self-serving ends."

Bunye's call closely hewed to a letter Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez sent to the Senate also yesterday, where he asked the chamber's leadership to sanction Madrigal for having "committed acts tantamount to treason" and for violating ethical standards for public officials.

Gonzalez said Madrigal showed disloyalty to the government since the communique "appeared to be derogatory to the Republic."

Gonzalez also told reporters in an interview that Madrigal's act supported the government's belief that the opposition had forged an alliance with the left.

"Considering that a state of rebellion exists between the Sison-led NPA and the Philippine government, Sen. Madrigal had, in effect, committed acts tantamount to treason punishable under Article 137 of the Revised Penal Code 'by adhering to the enemies of the Republic and/or giving them aid or comfort.' While we are not at war with any foreign state, there is 'actual assemblage of men for treasonable purposes that would be sufficient even if not actual clash of arms took place,'" Gonzalez said in the letter.

According to the justice secretary, visiting Sison per se was not illegal since Madrigal could have done that out of a noble purpose, but he said the issuance of the joint communique was a different matter.

Malacañang's call and Gonzalez's request may come to naught as Senate President Franklin Drilon yesterday scoffed at Gonzalez's letter.

"Justice Raul Gonzalez is over-reacting when he invoked the crime of treason against Sen. Jamby Madrigal for meeting with NDF leader Jose Ma. Sison," Drilon said in a statement.

Drilon argued that his colleague could not have committed the crime since the Philippines is not at war with another country, an essential element for treason under Article 137 of the Revised Penal Code.

"If talking to Sison is now a crime, then I am afraid a number of other government officials should also be prosecuted by Secretary Gonzalez," he said.

"We recall that no less than Speaker Jose de Venecia and several House members met, at one time or another, with Sison and other NDF officials in The Netherlands," he added.

NEW LABOR Secretary Arturo Brion stands behind President Macapagal-Arroyo during the oathtaking of new officials held at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. LYN RILLON

New labor chief spells out priorities

By Jerome Aning

LABOR DISPUTE AVOIDANCE IS ONE OF the priorities of newly-appointed Labor Secretary Arturo Brion, who formally assumed his post yesterday.

In his first press conference, Brion told reporters that he would be proposing a new method whereby union and management could call on the government for intervention in an ongoing labor dispute.

The new instrument, to be called request for intervention, would allow workers to call on the Department of Labor and Employment to settle differences between labor and management, he said.

Under the current setup, government will intervene in a dispute only if workers file a notice of strike, after which the DOLE's National Conciliation and Mediation Board steps in and undertakes compulsory arbitration.

In the new method, the filing of a request for intervention would be open to both management and labor, Brion explained. It would be purely voluntary and would bind the filing party not to do anything to exacerbate the dispute.

The DOLE circular for the new instrument for intervention would be out within two weeks, he said.

The new department chief said he would implement the various policies and programs of his predecessor, Patricia Sto. Tomas, for the rest of the year "with some fine-tuning and new initiatives."

Brion's first day at the DOLE was marked by protests organized by members of the Partido Manggagawa and the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino.

The protestors presented their "Workers Reform Agenda," a list of pro-labor reforms, and challenged the secretary to act on the workers' grievances within his first 100 days in office.

Yuen Abana, PM campaign officer, said: "Workers do not expect a miracle from the new labor secretary. What we want is a step towards the resolution to our long-standing problems such as starvation wages, insecure jobs, unemployment, capitalist abuse, union busting, and violations of labor rights and labor standards."

Vidal aide insists cardinal didn't join One Voice

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—CEBU ARCHBISHOP RICARDO Cardinal Vidal has not joined the multi-sectoral coalition that opposes moves to amend the Constitution and adopt a parliamentary form of government.

Vidal, who was still in Spain, issued the clarification through his spokesperson, Msgr. Achilles Dakay, Cebu Archdiocese media liaison officer.

Dakay said that during a meeting with One Voice convenor Christian Monsod, Vidal only agreed to facilitate a dialog between the coalition and Malacañang.

"That's what he (Vidal) said. He did not at all say yes to all the five points, and he did not sign anything," said Dakay.

Monsod, in a faxed statement to the INQUIRER, said that he had personally met with Vidal on June 26 at a residence in Wack-Wack subdivision, "during which time the Cardinal gave his express permission for us to announce that he had joined One Voice."

"On the matter of an unsigned form that is in possession of Msgr. Dacay ... perhaps [he] was not privy to the conversation between the Cardinal and Fr. Diola or to my meeting with the Cardinal," Monsod said.

Meanwhile, Lito Monico Lorenzana, chair of the Charter Change Advocacy Commission criticized Monsod for allegedly misrepresenting Vidal as having joined One Voice. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

NEWSBRIEFS

It's people who suffer

THE COUNTRY and the people will suffer the most from the new impeachment cases filed against the President, according to Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr. Revilla cited the country's experience from the previous attempt to impeach the President, saying that it was the economy and not the President that took the hardest hit. Revilla cited the fall of the peso, diving a whopping 4 percent in only a month, reaching one of its lowest levels at P56.44 to a dollar, with the key stock index falling 8.5 percent in only three weeks.

Free ride for disabled

PERSONS with disabilities can ride the Metro Rail Transit 3 (MRT)-Edsa route free of charge for one week beginning July 17. This was announced by Roberto Lastimoso, general manager of Metro Rail Transit Authority, in connection with the celebration of the 28th National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week on July 17-23. PWDs who wish to avail of the free rides must present upon entry and exit at MRT3 stations their Transportation Discounted Fare ID issued by the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons.

Economics congress at UP

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines School of Economics Student Council and the UP Economics Society are inviting senior and junior high school students to the National Youth Congress 2006. The NYC is an annual seminar-workshop that seeks to introduce high school students to basic principles of economics. This year's congress will focus on "Causes and Effects of Rising Prices." It will be held on July 22, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Diosdado Macapagal Hall of the UP School of Economics. Registration fee is P200, inclusive of lunch and snacks. For further information call Joseph Aruta at 0916-2376416 or Glaiza Villanueva at 0927-2154266

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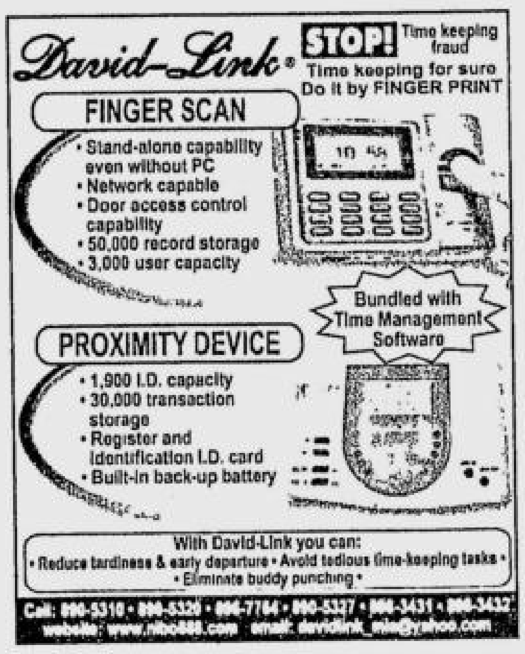

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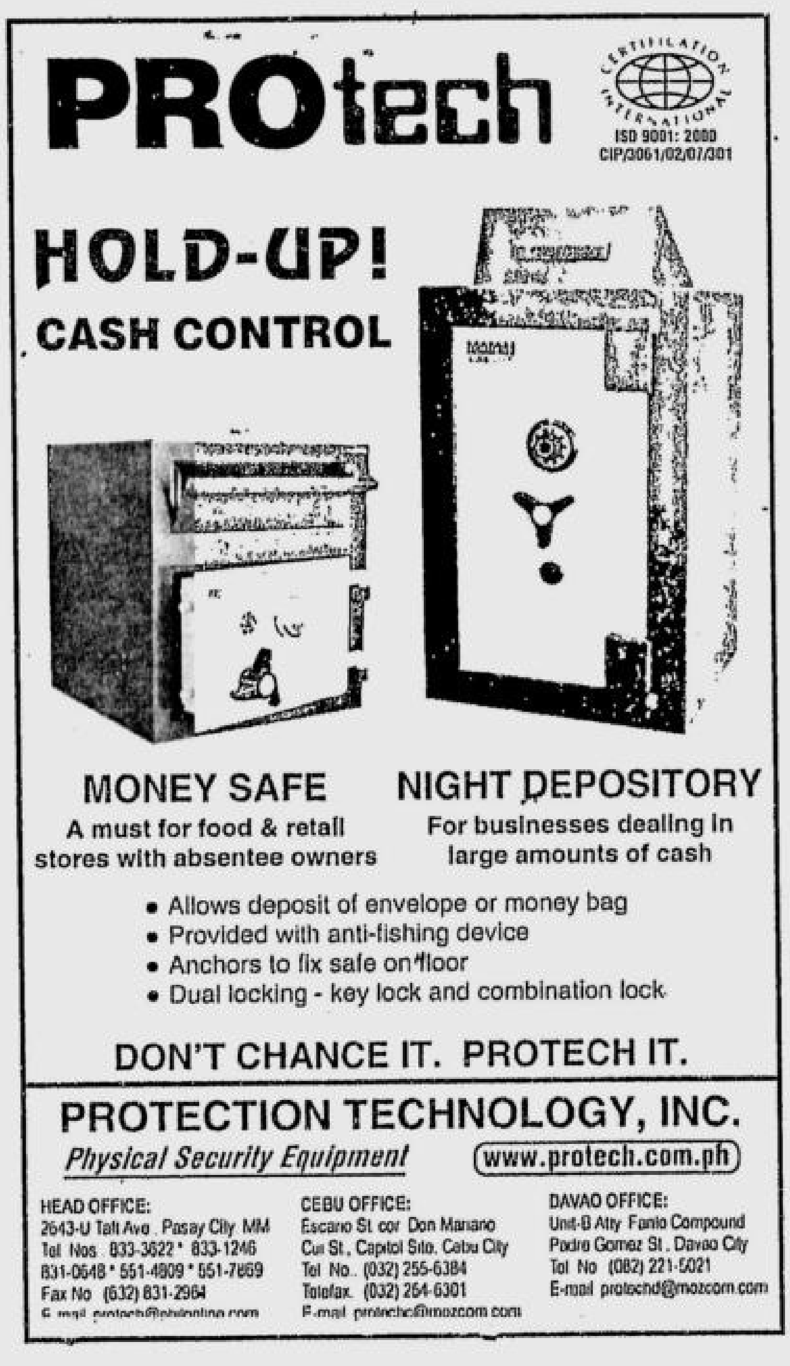

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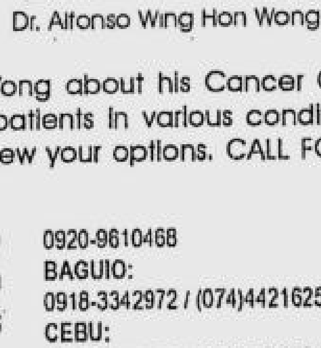

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Global Filipinos want sa

By Nikko Dizon

AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION OF Filipino migrants groups worldwide has protested the seeming exclusion of "global Filipinos" from the proposed revisions to the 1987 Constitution.

The Global Forum on the Constitution noted that global Filipinos would lose their right to suffrage if the system of government shifts to a parliamentary form.

It was only in 2004 that Filipinos abroad with dual citizenship were able to participate in the elections with the enactment of the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Law.

Under the OAV, Filipinos with dual citizenship can vote but only in national level elections.

With a shift to a parliamentary form of government, as proposed in the Charter change, global Filipinos will be unable to vote for members of parliament because they are district representatives elected in the local level.

According to the group, there are over 12 million "global Filipinos," including migrant Filipinos living and working in different parts of the world as well as the eight million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

"The Charter revision versions so far produced by different official bodies shut out all global Filipinos from taking direct participation in the country mainstream governance," the group said in a press statement.

"They cannot vote, they cannot run for public office, and they have no one to represent them in legislature," the group added.

At a forum held at the Manila Polo Club yesterday, leaders of Global Forum met with members of the Advocacy Commission led by former UP President Jose Abueva.

"We're looking for equality among all Filipinos in the pr
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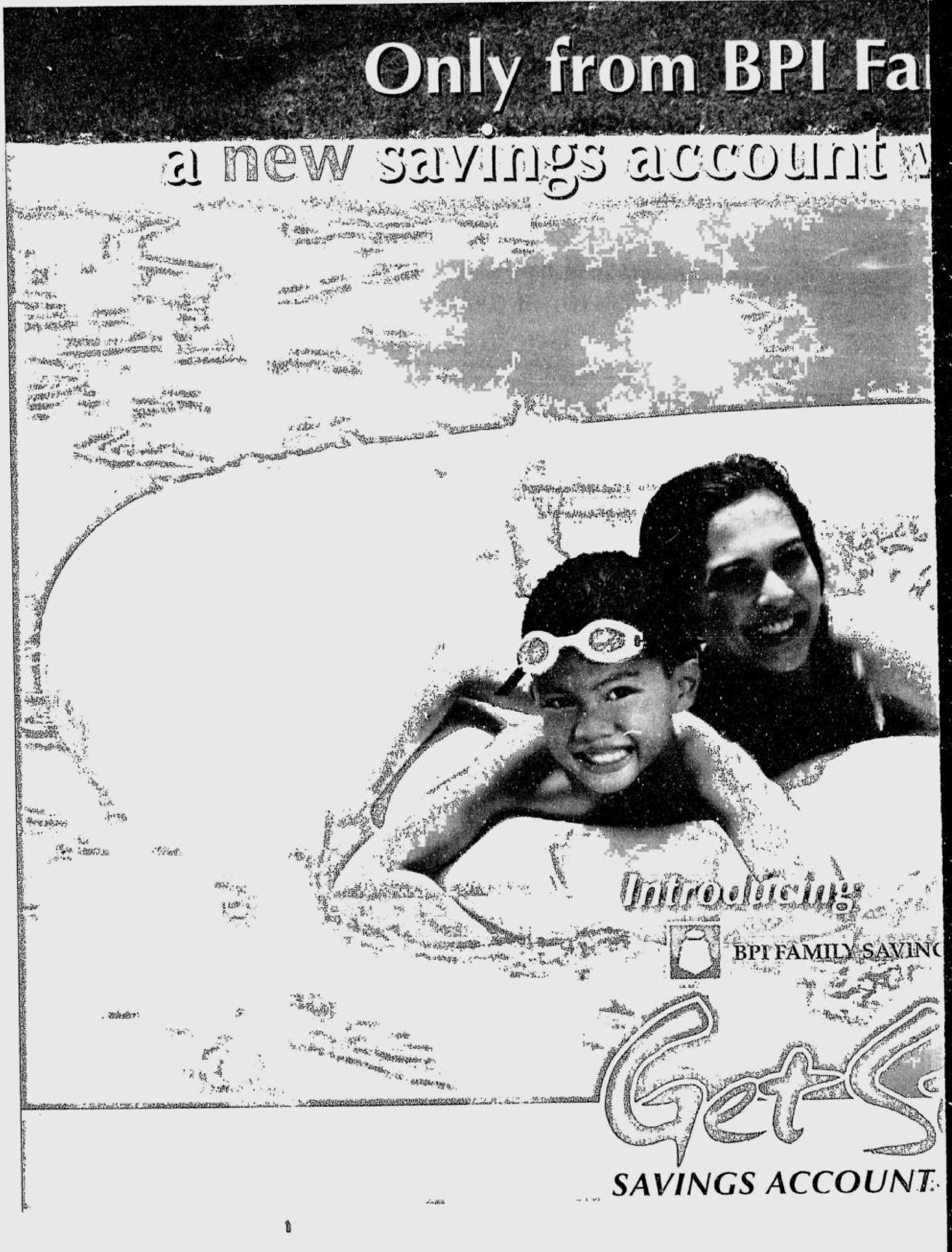
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Barrios added.

The Global Forum also said that most global Filipinos were not consulted on the Cha-cha. However, Abueva said that he went to San Francisco, USA, when he was chair of the Consultative Commission last year and met with Filipino groups.

Aside from being able to vote "in 2007 and beyond," Global Forum said that a new Constitution should also allow global Filipinos to be represented in parliament, just like onshore Filipinos, and allow global Filipinos to run for office under the party-list system.

The group also said that the Constitution should adopt the principle "Once a Filipino, Always a Filipino," where only a renunciation would lead to the loss of one's citizenship.

Global Forum stressed that global Filipinos should be "included in the process leading to the final version of the revised Constitution."

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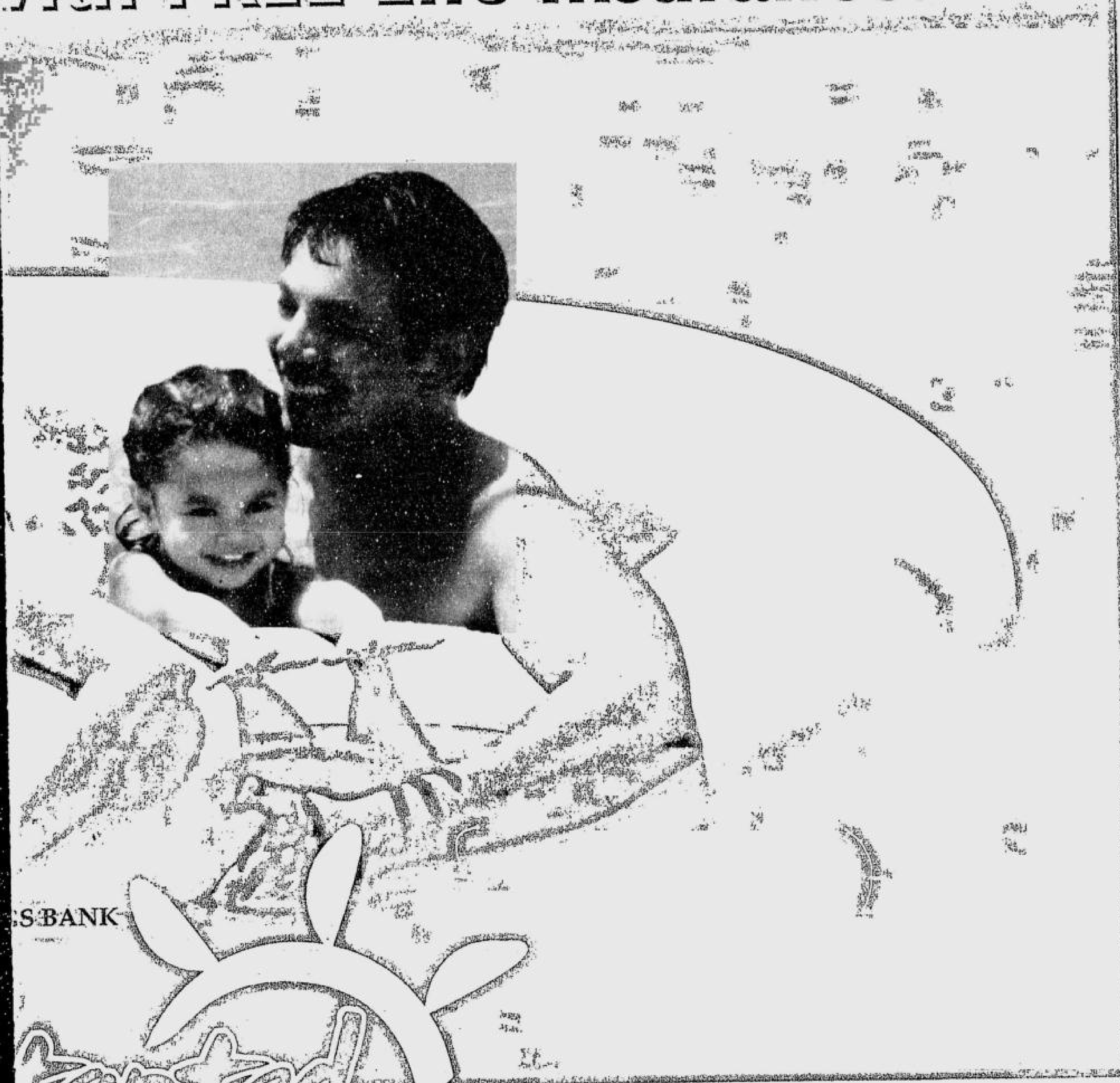

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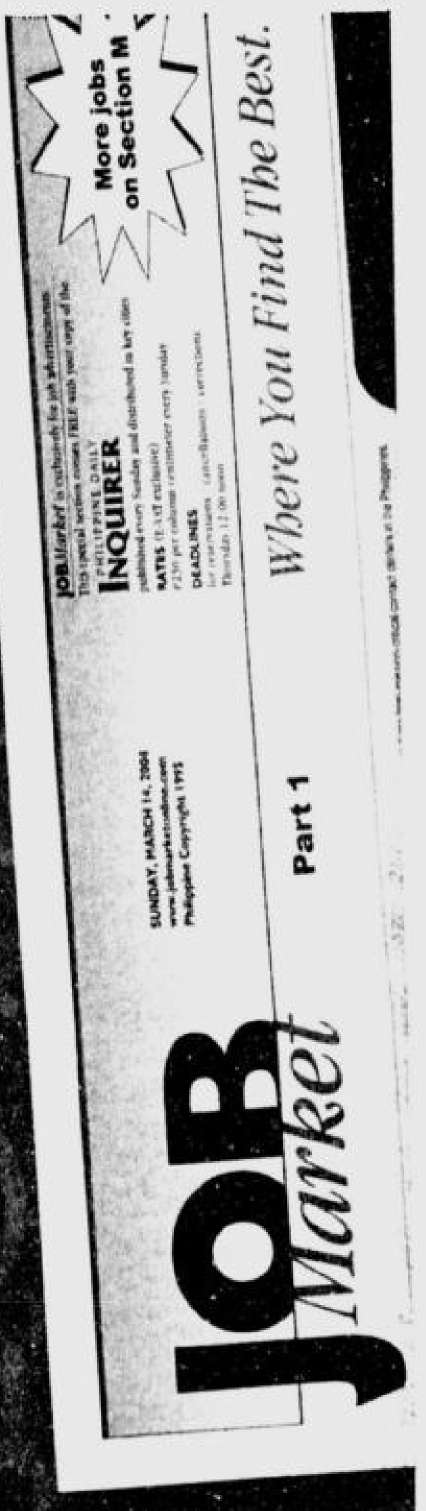

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OPINION

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Love-hate relationship

EDITORIAL

THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE had a continuing love-hate relationship in the 60 years since the US restored the independence of the Philippines. For 18 years, July 4 was called Philippine Independence Day, until in 1964 President Diosdado Macapagal decreed that Freedom Day should be celebrated on June 12, in commemoration of the republic that was proclaimed in Kawit, Cavite, by President Emilio Aguinaldo.

It has been a love relationship because Filipinos look up to the US as Mother America, a teacher and guardian that taught them English, laid down the foundation of a modern educational system and set up many of the institutions of democracy. Soon after the American colonizers took over in 1898, Filipinos veered away from Mother Spain and quickly took a liking to Hollywood, Coca-Cola and jazz. Now, the dream of many Filipinos is to emigrate to the US and become green card holders, if not naturalized US citizens.

But it has also been a hate relationship because over the years, irritants keep cropping up. Some Filipinos resented the fact that after World War II the US gave more attention and aid to a former enemy nation, Japan, than to its ward whose capital, Manila, was the second most devastated city next to Warsaw. The US, to add insult to injury, demanded parity rights from the Philippines at a time when it was lying prostrate from the ravages of war. The US also asked for and got military basing rights in the Philippines. The US military bases were a frequent source of irritants, including questions over the custody of US soldiers accused of crimes.

But in general, the relationship between the Philippines and the United States continues to be good. The US is still the Philippines' No. 1 trading partner, the biggest investor in the Philippines and the largest donor of foreign aid. Americans make up the biggest group of tourists to the Philippines. And Filipinos still prefer to go to the US than to any other country when they do post-graduate studies.

Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos have become naturalized citizens or permanent residents of the United States. The US is the biggest beneficiary of the brain drain from the Philippines. Thousands of doctors, nurses and other professionals yearly leave the Philippines for the US, where they get better pay and enjoy better opportunities for further training and professional advancement.

Only recently the US government increased its aid to the Philippines by 42 percent, from the original $92.7-million allocation to $131.2 million for fiscal year 2006. In May, the two countries formalized a new security arrangement to bolster their campaign against terrorism and other threats. The Philippines continues to be a partner of the US in the global war against terrorism. The US is giving the Philippines assistance in fighting drug trafficking and smuggling.

The US is intensifying its economic relationship with the Philippines through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. Recently it removed the Philippines from its "priority watch list" of countries that do not properly enforce intellectual property rights, and in May representatives of the two governments and private sector leaders met to assure stronger IPR protection. The Philippines has also made it out of Washington's human trafficking watch list and moved to a category of countries that have made substantial progress in combating this crime.

There has been a resurgence of some bad feeling about the United States recently because of the alleged rape of a 22-year-old Filipina by four US Marines in Subic. The insistence of the US government on retaining custody of the four accused Marines has angered many Filipinos who say that the US is treating the Philippines not as a co-equal state but as a colony. But some Philippine officials have explained that the present situation obtains because of the provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement. A renegotiation of the VFA has to be started soon.

On the 60th anniversary of Philippine-American Friendship Day, the relations between the two countries, despite occasional irritants and problems, continues to be strong and vibrant. It is a relationship that should redound to the good of both countries and to the security and well-being of their respective regions and the world.

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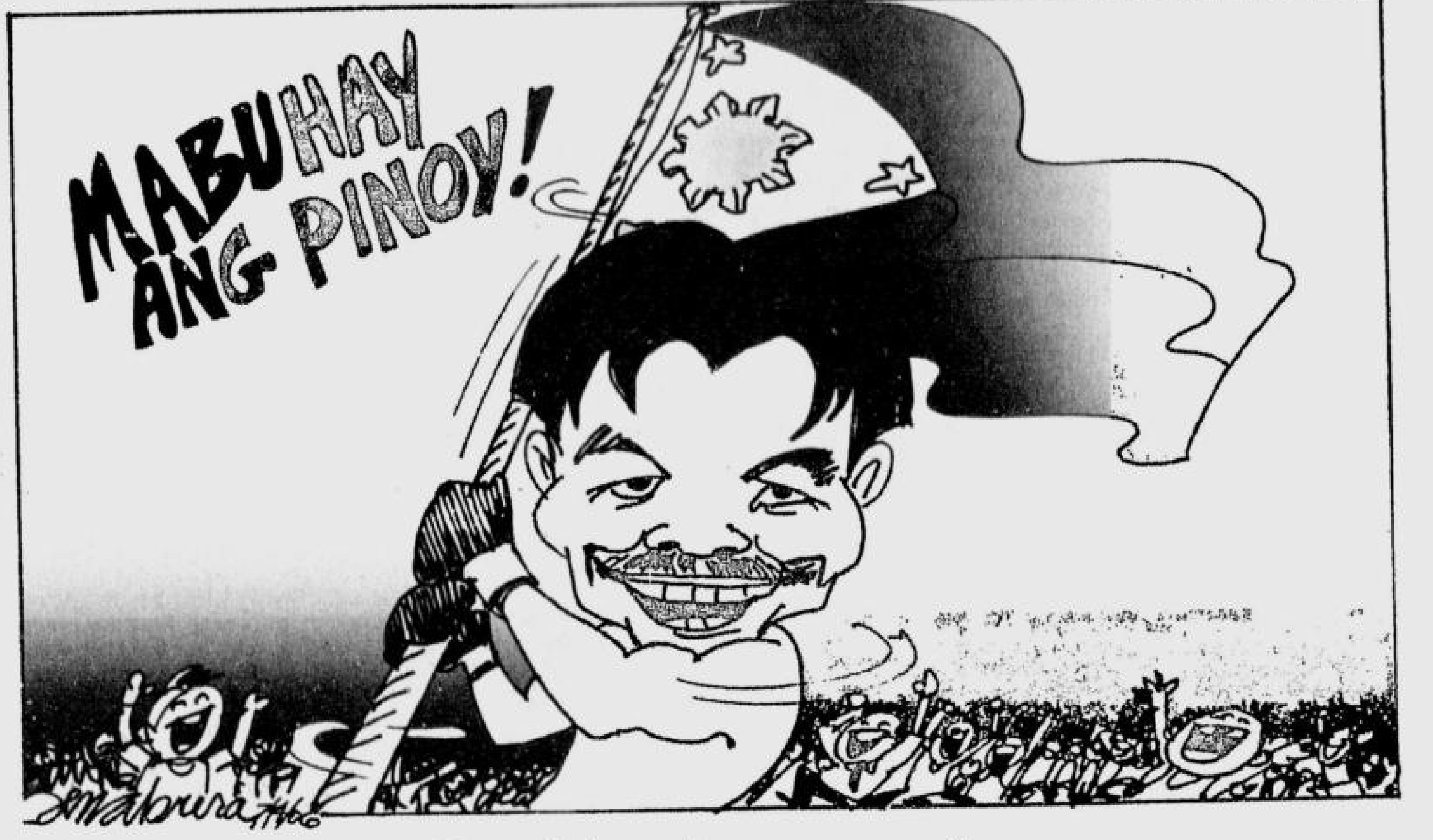
MABUHAY ANG PINOY!

Ducking homework

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

FROM WHAT REGIONS DO MOST FILIPINO overseas workers come? And how do the cash and goods they send back affect food on family tables, schools that kids attend and poverty in their own home regions?

Ernesto Pernia of the University of the Philippines' School of Economics grapples with these questions in a new study titled, "Diaspora, Remittances and Poverty Alleviation."

"Remittances (have become) the new development finance," as migrants the world over send money home. Filipino OFWs ranked third in terms of *padala*, after Indians and Mexicans.

Pernia does not recycle the question earlier studies addressed: Do remittances help lift families out of penury? (They do.)

An increase of P1,000 in a *padala* packet results in a P2,543 additional outlay for food, clothing and other basic needs, per person among the poorest 40 percent of households, Pernia writes. This holds true "even in lagging regions."

The analysis focuses on "home-country" consequences. "The more developed regions send more OFWs than the less developed ones," the study found.

"Appreciably greater shares of the total remittances are going" to the better off. "Remittances overall may contribute to a widening of the economic disparities across regions," may be one unintended spinoff.

OFWs from poorer regions send home significantly higher average remittances than those from more affluent regions. Altruism? That one is hard to pin down. But there seems to be a "higher propensity to send more money to assist their more deprived families."

"Remittances matter significantly for regional development," the study asserts. "But overall increases in regional incomes do not seem to benefit low-income families as much as the upper-income ones."

In 2004, over 1.1 million migrants made tracks for, as the pop song put it, those "far away places with strange sounding names." Barely a decade earlier, 795,000 left. This exodus rose, on average, by 3.7 percent yearly.

Remittances outpaced that by surging at an average of 12.1 percent yearly. This was "more than thrice faster than the increase in the number of OFWs."

This steady cash swell contrasts sharply with foreign direct investment, "whose growth has been erratic and on the downtrend more recently." Official development assistance has been shrinking.

Precise data on remittances is difficult to pin down. "It's easier to hide cold cash than warm bodies," Pernia admits. Last year remittances were officially recorded at $11.7 billion or about 10 percent of GDP. The real amount is double, maybe more, the World Bank estimates. Many remitters skip banks and ship via "carrier pigeons:" couriers, money changers and other informal channels. Half of OFWs in Hong Kong "do not have bank accounts in their home country," the Asian Development Bank found.

Pernia reports that one out of every five migrants come from Southern Tagalog: Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Quezon and Rizal lumped as Calabarzon. The National Capital Region accounts for 18 out of every 100 migrants. The proportion in Central Luzon is 14. "Metro Manila and adjacent regions of Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon together account for at least half of OFWs."

Other significant senders of OFWs are Ilocos, Western Visayas and Cagayan Valley. These three account for close to a quarter of the total.

Relatively smaller fractions of the total were reported from the poorer regions of Mindanao, Eastern Visayas and Bicol. Clearly, the poor are less able to migrate

Average six-month remittance per OFW in 1995 was P34,207. This rose to P72,795 in 2004. And out of every dollar remitted, from 18 to 27 cents went to Metro Manila. Southern Tagalog got 18 to 22 cents and Central Luzon 12 to 15 cents. "Thus, over half of OFW remittances went to the country's three most developed regions."

Western Visayas, Ilocos and Central Visayas got a fifth to a quarter of the total. "Predictably, the poorer regions were recipients of much smaller shares."

"The pattern of average remittance per OFW by region is intriguing," Pernia writes. "It departs from the regional distribution of OFWs and total remittances."

Regional data on average remittances in 1995 show that Central Visayas got the highest average remittance per OFW. It was 1.6 times the national average. Metro Manila came second at 1.3 times. Western Visayas followed at 1.2 times.

They were trailed by Northern Mindanao, Southern Mindanao, and the Cordillera Autonomous region, in that order. Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon were only ninth and seventh in the ranking, while Bicol was eighth.

But by 2004, there were telling changes. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao ranked first in average remittance, 1.4 times the national average. Metro Manila came in second again. Central Visayas, Southern Tagalog, Southern Mindanao, Eastern Visayas, Caraga, Northern Mindanao, Central Luzon and Bicol followed, in that order.

Though fewer in number, OFWs from less developed regionals may be more highly skilled. Hence, they earn higher average incomes.

Labor migration is not entirely an unqualified blessing, Pernia writes. It exacts no mean sacrifices from migrant workers and their families.

At the national level, the remittance bonanza has kept government cobbling difficult but essential policy reforms. Remittances are transitory. They should not be an excuse for government "to buckle down and do long overdue home work."

Commonalities

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I DON'T GREATLY MIND THAT THEY'VE MADE it appear as though GMA has conquered the hearts and minds of the Italians and Spaniards. If they want to delude the Filipino people along with themselves, well, that has always been their favorite sport. Though while at that, clearly the bright boys in Malacañang did not do their homework. Nobody seems to have wondered if going to Europe at this time wasn't a thoroughly stupid idea. The reason for it being that a monumentally earthshaking event, one that has been known to stop wars and time itself, was even then taking place up north in Germany. An event called the World Cup.

Had George W. Bush called on the Pope and Jose Luis Zapatero, he himself would have met with rulers of heaven and earth in the throes of distraction. Oh, yes, the Pope watches the World Cup, too, and might have found a visitation from a worldly vassal an ungodly intrusion into a divine preoccupation. Certainly, the media of both countries would have been at best marginally aware that the president of the most powerful country on earth had landed on their shores.

As for the visit of a fake president from a country called Lilliput, well, only the Lilliputians could be made to believe it actually created ripples. But like I said, I don't mind that greatly. What I do mind is that GMA actually visited the monument of Jose Rizal in Madrid, images from which were splashed in newspapers and TV last weekend. Prospero Nograles was just proposing last week that a strict separation be made between Church and State. I myself am proposing that a strict separation be made between Rizal and GMA. Or that an injunction be made preventing GMA from coming within 100 yards of any monument, street or bakery that has the word "Rizal" on it.

The only two things GMA and Rizal have in common are their height and their fluency in Spanish. Everything ends there. By his works and deeds, Rizal showed he stood 10 feet taller than all of his countrymen, with the possible exception of Andres Bonifacio. By her works and deeds, GMA shows she stands four feet shorter than all of her countrymen, with the possible exception of her husband. As to being able to speak Spanish, well, Rizal spoke a host of other languages, but the one that he was truly proud of was the language of truth, quite apart from the language of love. He paid dearly for the language of truth as much as he gained sublimely for the language of love.

At the very least, my proposal for the separation of Rizal and Gloria comes from the fact that she has done him a horribly ill turn already. Forever engraved the mind of this country will be the image of her in Baguio in December 2002, on the day devoted to recalling the heroism of Rizal, which was the day he was shot to death in Bagumbayan, vowing not to torment this country some more by attempting to lead it one second longer than the remainder of Erap's term. Because, as she said presciently there, to do so would to be to plunge this country into "never-ending divisiveness." That was the last time she would tell the truth. Rizal is still waiting for her to apologize.

At the very most, my proposal for the separation of Rizal and Gloria comes from the fact that the latter is the very antithesis of the former. Gloria is the very opposite of what Rizal was and is. Rizal loved this country so much he was willing to die for it. Gloria loves power so much she is willing to kill activists and journalists for it.

As I wrote during Rizal's birthday last month, Rizal was an exceptionally gifted man, a jack of all trades and master of all. He was a doctor, ophthalmologist, novelist, poet, essayist, botanist, linguist, sportsman (excelling in fencing and shooting), a veritable Renaissance man. He could have taken the safe path, living the salon life in Barcelona, tolerated, if not entirely accepted as peer by his colonial masters, content to earn a living doing marginal OFW work if he could not earn a license to practice his art or craft. Instead he chose to risk life and limb by exposing the tyrannical rule of the friars in particular (they were a temporal power as much as a spiritual one, and ruled in both respects viciously) and came back to his *patria adorada* despite the importuning of his friends not to, and paid the ultimate price for telling the truth.

If GMA has any bone in her body inducing a capacity for self-sacrifice, only she knows about it. The only self-sacrifice she has taken before and after she was accidentally thrust into power by Edsa II was exiling her husband to Las Vegas during the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal. That was a sacrifice? That was a reward—for both of them. And for a crime the likes of which has not been seen in this country before. In any case, it made about as much sense as Charter change: GMA has stolen the vote? The solution is to exile her husband. GMA is not the rightful president of this country? The solution is to change the Charter.

I don't know which is worst: GMA acting as though she is president of this country, as though she is in constant communication with God, or as though she is the repository of the legacy of this country's heroes. Rizal did dream of Filipinos being proud and free. Yet today, we see a nation where people, especially journalists, are murdered for telling the truth, where selfishness and ruthlessness and lust for power are paraded as virtues, where the youth, who are the hope of the motherland, are pilloried as upstarts for heckling impostors, and we do nothing. Well, we send text jokes.

I myself wish GMA would have a third thing in common with Rizal, which is that she would be shot at Bagumbayan. I can at least safely say she will not go on to become a hero, national or barangay

Pinoy style counter-terrorism

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE POLICE REPORTED LAST SUNDAY THAT there was zero crime across the nation, as the people, including criminal elements, paused to watch their champ, Manny Pacquiao, beat Oscar Larios of Mexico. But elsewhere in the nation, another great sport was being followed in the wee hours of the morning in various venues, such some Global City restaurants and the Moro Lorenzo Gym at the Ateneo: the World Cup. What heightens interest in this year's Cup is that it looks like the two traditional European protagonists, host Germany and France, will fight for the championship—unless Portugal spoils that prospect by beating France on Wednesday at 3 a.m. (Manila time). Champagne flowed at Champs Elysees last Saturday when France beat Brazil, eliminating the last of the great South American teams.

* * *

Brazil's defeat was particularly bitter, for in 1998 they had also fought for the championship which France won. Last weekend's return bout was supposed to break the jinx for Brazil, but it was equally important for France. My husband was assigned as our ambassador to Cambodia at that time, and I recall that the French victory came on Bastille Day. That day, the French Embassy in Phnom Penh, instead of hosting just the customary evening reception, opened its doors from morning till night, with wines, cheeses and caviar flowing. Will the fates bless France this year, or will Portugal ruin its chances?

By the way, so big is the World Cup craze that the Saudi king was ready to give each player of the country's team an extra bonus of $160,000 had it gone to the quarterfinals.

* * *

Dr. Jose V. Abueva, former UP president and now president of Kalayaan College, who chaired the Constitutional Consultative Commission, made a strong pitch for people's initiative at the recent dzRH program I co-host with Cecile Alvarez. He was reacting to the full-page ad that One Voice had just published, rejecting this method of changing the Charter. Abueva noted that in 1986 President Cory Aquino did not call a constitutional convention, but instead appointed the 49 members of the Constitutional Commission which worked for six months on the new constitution without consultations with the people. By contrast, said Abueva, the Consultative Commission conducted workshops across the country. He also noted that all the constitutions we've had—the 1899, 1935, 1971 and the 1987—expressly recognized that sovereignty resides in the people and all authority emanates from them. Now, says Abueva, if we grant that the people are sovereign, then let's respect their decision to back up a people's initiative to amend the Constitution, and not deride them, as One Voice is doing.

Abueva pointed out that one million people at Edsa I succeeded in ousting a dictator and installing a new president and about the same number also succeeded in ousting "a second president whom we didn't like." Why is it, he asked, that when 10 million people, backed up by about 1.7 million local officials, sign the people's initiative, they are belittled?

* * *

Spain and the Philippines signed a mutual agreement against terrorism during President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent visit to Madrid. It will be recalled that Spain had its own "9/11" two years ago, with the bombing of the big railway station and other places in the capital. The agreement is a good prelude to the Asean Summit to be held in Mactan this December, since the member nations will continue to be preoccupied with this problem. The Madrid pact is the logical follow-through to the first Counter-Terrorism Experts' Conference (CTEC) held at Mactan Shangri-La in Cebu a few months ago. Organized and chaired by retired Gen. Benjamin Defensor, the international conference drew close to 500 participants from 56 countries and four international organizations, including the United Nations and the European Commission, led by Margrethe Loj, who chairs the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee. The conference, whose theme was "Defeating Dilemmas in Counter-Terorism," also drew ambassadors from various countries.

* * *

I had occasion to chat with Benjie Defensor about the CTEC and he was all praises for the "special extras of everything," among them, "creative protocol, secure and 'terror-free' arrangements, cooperation among and resourcefulness of government agencies that participated, volunteerism, Cebuano hospitality, military efficiency and fiesta reception for all the delegates." The highlight of the conference was the signing of the "Cebu Concord" that encouraged each region to develop its own counter-terrorism strategy, even as it batted for international cooperation. Defensor also paid tribute to the all-Filipino moderating team that handled the conference discussions, led by Secretary Cerge Remonde, Undersecretary Antonio Santos Jr. and Dr. Carolina Hernandez, and notable media personalities.

But it was Pinoy hospitality and the fabled Cebu lifestyle that the delegates will remember long after they have returned home—the Pinoy touch. Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia and Pagcor Cebu helped transport them to the rich cultural stream and musical traditions of the region, as showcased by Sugbuanon music and dance. Ultimately, what loosened up the delegates and the ambassadors was the dancing, led by famed Cebu ballroom dancers Ed and Eleanor Hayco, who were part of the group that helped the Philippine team win several gold medals in dancesport in the recent SEA Games. Music was provided by various bands, including Sounds of '69, courtesy of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1969, to which Defensor, the counter-terrorism czar, belongs. As one PMA classmate quipped, the counter-terrorism czar was free to terrorize everyone with his music. One delegate was heard remarking, "Filipinos have an amazing national rhythm and the flair of a musically gifted people."

Another heroic turn

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ODDS WERE SO OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOR of Manny Pacquiao that it made little sense to lay bets on the outcome of Sunday's fight. Still, those who bet on a victory for Chololo Larios must have salivated just a bit at the prospect of a windfall when, in the third round, Pacquiao appeared to be in trouble, trapped against the ropes and trying to fight off a barrage from the Mexican.

But once he managed to slip away from this tight spot, Pacquiao had the rest of the 12-rounder sewed up. Twice, local fans thought the fight was finished, but Larios showed that, despite his underdog status he still had a lot of heart in him, getting on his feet again and even grinning widely, as if to taunt his opponent.

Still, the duel at Araneta Coliseum lacked some of the edge and sparkle of the Pacquiao-Morales fight in Las Vegas, where the outcome was far more uncertain than in Sunday's match. Maybe we've just gotten used to seeing the Pacman bring down his opponents, or perhaps the relentless promotions had numbed our excitement.

* * *

IT DIDN'T help, either, that Pacquiao himself seemed distracted, with concerns other than prevailing in the ring perhaps stirring in his mind.

He had not just his reputation and his health on the line, after all, but even a considerable monetary interest, since he had also helped promote the fight. Then, too, in the months since the Las Vegas victory, Pacquiao has become a one-man endorsement conglomerate, his face and even that of his wife and boys used to sell products as diverse as gin and beer, to fast food chicken and even a muscle relaxant.

His commercial activities and undoubtedly vastly improved material circumstances may have taken some of the bloom off Pacquiao's image, and yet, there's no denying that in Manny Pacquiao Filipinos have found a hero after their own heart.

* * *

IF YOU'RE a serious fan of science fiction and fantasy classics, like "Lord of the Rings," "Star Wars," "Star Trek" and even "Harry Potter," you might want to take part in "New Worlds 4: A Broken Time Machine," the fourth Philippine Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention which kicks off on July 16 at the Rockwell Tent, under the auspices of the New World Alliance.

New Worlds 4, what members of fandom call their "con," features booths and displays of the various fan groups as well as the ever-popular "Cosplay Contest" where fans dress up as their favorite science fiction and fantasy characters, with crowds coming just to ogle blue- or green-skinned creatures, androids, Jedi, Sith, Federation officers and even futuristic vehicles!

Another feature of this year's "con" is the New Worlds Amazing Race, where teams compete against each other to complete a series of challenges. Organizers promise that this year, the challenges will be "more outrageous, the race more exciting, and the finale a bigger surprise than ever." Teams planning to join the Amazing Race are encouraged to brush up on their knowledge of science fiction and fantasy.

An exciting addition to this year's convention is the New Worlds Auction, which will feature fan memorabilia, collectibles, and general merchandise at great prices. The New Worlds Alliance counts hundreds of dedicated science-fiction and fantasy fans among its ranks, so expect a wide and colorful selection of items.

This will be a silent auction. Participants will be able to keep track of the auction by watching large bulletin boards set up at the auction booth and at various places in the convention area.

This year, too, marks the return of the "Stormballs," a group of young men who walk around with Storm Trooper helmets and tight pants (hence the name) who were sorely missed last year.

Another feature of this year's "Con" are Neil Gaiman's First Philippine Graphic/Fiction Awards on July 15, where the best of locally created graphic novels and works of fiction and fantasy will be honored with a cash prize of up to P100,000.

* * *

THE NEW Worlds Alliance (NWA) was founded in 2003 by seven local science fiction and fantasy fan groups: Via Astris—The Star Trek Club of the Philippines, Star Wars Philippines, The Philippine Tolkien Society, Pinoy Harry Potter, Pinoy X-Philes, Pinoy Slayers, and The Alliance of Eclectic Gamers and Interactive Storytellers. Its aim was to provide a venue for Filipino science fiction and fantasy fans to interact, hold activities, and express themselves and their love for their respective fandoms. In March of that same year, Via Astris hosted "New Worlds: The First Philippine Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention," at the Premiere Cinema Complex to celebrate the release of "Star Trek: Nemesis."

In January 2004, it was The Philippine Tolkien Society's turn to host "A Long Expected Party: The Second Philippine Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention," to mark the end of the "Lord of the Rings" movie saga and the release of "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King." The original seven Alliance members groups were joined by The Matrix Philippines, Arkham Philippines, Pinoy Fremen, The Talon, and the Philippine Highlander Society in the two-day event at the Powerplant Mall Parking Quad.

With the advent of "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith," Star Wars Philippines organized "New Worlds Episode III: The Third Philippine Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention" in May 2005 at the Glorietta Activity Center. Four new groups were welcomed into the Alliance this year: Mechapinoy, Sci-fi Philippines, The Philippine Order of Narnians, and CharmedPinoy. Wheel of Time Philippines also participated as a guest group.

This year, the New Worlds Alliance and Fully Booked present "New Worlds 4: A Broken Time Machine," with a new member-group Battlestar Galactica-Philippines.

Can Hamas stay in power?

WORLD VIEW

Shlomo Avineri

WITH ONE-THIRD OF THE PALESTINIANS' Hamas-led government now under arrest by Israel, the escalation in Israeli-Palestinian relations has moved beyond military confrontation. A far more fundamental question has come into view: Can a Palestinian government that draws its authority from an agreement with Israel stay in power when it is led by an organization committed to the destruction of Israel?

The abduction of an Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip, as well as the abduction and subsequent murder of an 18-year-old Israeli civilian in the West Bank, have brought to the fore that question, which has haunted Israeli-Palestinian relations since Hamas won parliamentary elections in January.

The international community, led by the "Quartet" (the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia), has put three conditions to the Hamas government if it wishes to achieve international legitimacy and continue to be supported financially: Hamas must recognize Israel's right to exist, stop all terrorist activities, and commit itself to carry out all previous international agreements signed by the Palestinian Authority. These look like reasonable conditions to any outside observer. To Hamas, however, they appear to undermine its very raison d'etre.

After all, this is an organization committed to the destruction of Israel—its charter calls for a holy war against all Jews—and the establishment of an Islamic state in all of historical Palestine. Indeed, Article 22 of that charter reveals that Hamas views the Jews (together with the Freemasons and other nefarious organizations like Rotary International and the Lions Club), as responsible for the French and Bolshevik Revolutions, World War I and World War II. So it is no great surprise that Hamas rejected the Quartet's conditions.

At the same time, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), who represents Fatah, which lost the January elections, has tried in vain to find common ground with Hamas through an ambiguous text known as "The Prisoners' Document." This document was intended to serve as an implicit acceptance of Israel's right to exist. But nothing of the sort appears in the truncated text approved by Hamas. On the contrary, the text legitimizes continuing attacks against Israeli civilians in the West Bank, making it unacceptable to Israel—and to the international community.

But the current crisis cannot be solved by words alone. One of the paradoxical results of America's almost messianic belief in elections as a panacea for all the ills of the Middle East is that Hamas—the winner of democratic elections—has gained a degree of legitimacy that it never had before. On the other hand, Hamas' history and current behavior clearly indicate that it regards elections as merely a political tool, and that it is devoid of any commitment to the norms and values underlying democracy.

Fascist and communist regimes of the past, which followed a similar instrumentalist approach to democracy, come to mind here. Yet, at the same time, the US supports Abu Mazen, trying to undermine the Hamas government, thus casting a shadow on the credibility of its own commitment to democracy.

The current violence may escalate further, and could bring down the Hamas government. On the other hand, diplomatic means may bring about the release of the Israeli soldier and put a stop to the firing of Qassam rockets from Gaza into Israel—a daily occurrence that has challenged the credibility of the new Israeli government under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

But the fundamental problem is that, until now, at every historical juncture, the Palestinians have refused to accept a compromise and consequently failed in nation-building. In 1947, they refused the UN partition plan, which called for the establishments of two states in British Palestine. In 1993, after the Oslo agreements, the Palestinian Authority established under Yasir Arafat became another militarized authoritarian regime, very much like Syria and Egypt, and did nothing to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian refugees. It was this failure that brought Hamas to power.

The current crisis is obviously the first serious test for Olmert and his plans for further withdrawal from Israeli-occupied territories. But it is an even greater test for the Palestinians: Will they once again be led by a radical and fanatical leadership into another national catastrophe? Or will they finally realize that a future of independence, sovereignty and dignity is open to them—but only if they grant the Israelis what they rightly claim for themselves?

The international community can urge the Palestinians toward a decision. But that decision and its moral costs remain in the hands of the Palestinians alone. *Project Syndicate*

Shlomo Avineri, a former director general of the Israeli foreign ministry, is professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

No free lunch

YOUNG BLOOD

Raoul A. Bermejo III, M.D.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

A NEW PHYSICIAN HAS MANY THINGS TO BE BOTHERED about these days, from an eroding public image of the doctor, the crisis of health worker migration to the lack of access of many Filipinos to health care. These issues have been often talked about, so I would like to raise another. I am bothered by the fact that our class graduation party was largely paid for by a drug company. The company took care of the P150,000 bill for dinner.

Let's be clear about this. It was a party, not a scientific meeting, not a course designed for continuing medical education. People went there to eat, drink and be merry.

I am bothered that our class allowed it. It was patently a marketing scheme put together by the drug company and our class fell for it.

Many of us felt that they could rise above it all and resist such schemes. I think that is being quite naïve. Drug companies employ such schemes because they work. There is clear evidence that physicians are influenced by such marketing efforts when they prescribe medicines.

And even if a doctor really cannot be swayed by these marketing schemes, where is the marketing money coming from? Does anyone honestly think that it is out of the goodness of their hearts that drug firms undertake such activities? Or their fondness of physicians?

Marketing costs are passed on to the patients. The costs of maintaining an army of cute and dapper medical representatives, distributing cups of coffee, sponsoring golf tournaments, giving free lunches, tours, and various freebies to physicians, etc. contribute to the high prices of medicines in this country. All these freebies come from the pockets of patients, many of them poor and unable to afford the complete course of medications their doctors prescribe.

The prices of drugs in this country are at par with those in Western Europe, the United States and Canada. Since our country does not have a pharmaceutical industry of its own, it has become one of the favorite playgrounds of the three big pharmaceutical firms. And these firms are now challenging even the band-aid effort of our government to make essential drugs accessible to poor Filipinos through parallel drug importation. Expensive marketing schemes compound the problem of unjust drug pricing.

Will taking a stand now against unethical practices change the situation? Our daily choices may seem too puny to have any significant effect. But how else can we change the situation? Who will take a stand if not us?

There is no such thing as a free lunch—or a free graduation party.

Raoul A. Bermejo III, MD, 27, graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Medicine last May.

Mane contention

Portia Marie M. Silva

EVER SINCE UNILEVER'S CREAM SILK CAME OUT WITH its "choose to be beautiful" campaign, I've never stopped fussing with hair. With the screen goddess Gretchen Barretto flipping her jet-black, lengthy and slimming sleek hair behind an entourage of equally to-die-for babes sporting the same gorgeous hair, who wouldn't fidget over her wavy, unruly locks?

Obviously, not me. And now that my hair has grown almost three inches below shoulder-length, I cannot figure out what to do with it next. Some of my friends suggested that I have a relaxing or rebonding treatment at any established salon. My Mom recommends that I have it trimmed to get rid of split ends. My sister thinks it is best to maintain my hair and even make it grow some more. With different suggestions coming from the people I trust the most, I'm confused.

Why am I uncertain—even afraid—to have my hair pampered at the salon?

Two years ago when layered hair was the "in" thing, the stylist I went to convinced me that my wavy hair would look high-maintenance if I went with the trend. After what seemed like hours of cutting, brushing and finger-styling, I ended up looking like someone who badly needed help with her hair. It was that ugly.

Before our junior prom last year, my Mom had my hair chopped off almost up to chin level to give me the "modern version of the bob." Sure I ended up looking like Bob, some pre-pubescent schoolboy. No kidding.

My trips to any salon, even the reputable ones, have almost always been a disaster. No matter what I do, I have never had the perfect cut. And that's why I've decided to stick to using hair products that work, as fashion icons swear.

I've tried a variety of shampoo-with-conditioner or shampoo-then-conditioner formulas, but to my dismay, my hair just doesn't cooperate. My hair has always been a sea of messy waves, something Piandre hair stylists would want to give an emergency fix anytime soon.

But on second thought, is getting that perfect hair the real problem or am I just showing my insecurities again?

I think it's, the second. In a world where sporting luscious, long hairdos scream beautiful, you can't blame anyone who wonders where the heck these models got their magnificent, almost impossibly straight locks. And why can't I get enough satisfaction from the varied hair products the market offers, with the promises to turn me into one of those ladies?

That is the problem. We have been made to believe that beautiful hair can bring out the best in us, when in fact it does not. With all the hair-related commercials shown on TV, people have become obsessed with styling creams, instant conditioners, hair waxes, etc. Most of us refuse to appreciate what we already have.

Come to think of it, why should I compare myself with that chick in that ad? On a higher level, why should I devote my precious time bothering about my hair? Their locks are reel, mine's real and that's the reality. Mine has never been treated or altered in any way. My hair is 100-percent natural and I can flip it the same way they do on TV.

So after a lengthy discussion about the texture, form and over-all appearance of my hair, I'm finally ditching the "I choose, I choose to be beautiful" jingle. Simply because I already am. After all, hair alone does not define authentic beauty.

Portia Marie M. Silva, 16, is an AB Communications freshman at the Ateneo de Manila University.

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Yes to sex education but condoms not enough

I AGREE WITH MICHAEL L. TAN'S COMment in his column "Yari" (PDI, 6/21/06): "[W]e do little to talk about sex, about learning to be more discerning with relationships." Tan also stressed that there is a need to do some serious sex education to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, especially among the youth.

However, real sex education is not the same as safe-sex education. Sex education cannot be reduced to contraception education. A real and effective means to educate the youth about sex and human sexuality entails not merely an education about techniques, but an education on values and self-mastery. Here, the parents' role is crucial.

Unfortunately, many parents find the idea of talking to their children about sex distasteful. They would rather let the school take care of this sticky subject. Perhaps, they themselves never benefited from a sincere discussion of sex from their own parents and so, feel some understandable uneasiness about discussing such an intimate part of their married life with their children.

But to neglect to talk about sex with our children is a great disservice to them. We live in such a sexually charged environment and our children are bombarded with sex or sexual innuendoes on a daily basis, whether we like it or not. Now, more than ever, our young people need the advice and insights of their parents to equip them with the criteria to make sound judgments about sex.

A common misconception among the youth is that when you love someone, the best way to show that love is by sleeping with that person. This may be the romantic message of most feel-good teen-age movies, but the reality is far from this idea. The sad truth is that no one wants to be used or abused, so, when a person is discarded after his/her sexual charm wears off, the thrill of sex often gives way to the agony of emptiness.

In the end, sex needs to be understood in the context of a sincere and complete gift of oneself. Sex is an experience more of giving than receiving, so the more sincere and complete the gift, the more fulfilling is the sexual act. In reality, such a gift is difficult to give in a relationship that is non-exclusive and non-permanent.

Yes! It's high time we talked about sex with our kids, but let's talk about it the right way, because there's more to sex than just condoms.

—**STEPHANIE C. OLIVARES,**
Ayala Alabang Village,
Muntinlupa City

IBP leadership row remains unsettled

THE WHEELS OF JUSTICE ARE MOVING exceedingly slow on the row over the leadership of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. Leonard De Vera, the duly elected IBP executive vice president, should have assumed the presidency on July 1, 2005. But as if cue, a few weeks before the scheduled changing of the guards, a case was filed against De Vera, based on the same grounds invoked in an earlier case filed (by the same complainant) to disqualify De Vera from running as IBP governor, and thus prevent his being elected as EVP. That first case was decided by the Supreme Court in favor of De Vera, paving the way for his election as IBP governor and EVP.

In the second (recycled) case, however, the Court issued on May 10, 2005 a temporary restraining order enjoining De Vera from assuming the IBP presidency.

Later, the IBP board of governors, whose terms were about to expire, convened a last-minute kangaroo meeting to expel De Vera as governor and EVP without due process.

The recycled case was apparently triggered by the withdrawal (at the instigation of the majority of the IBP board) of the petition (earlier filed with the unanimous approval of the same board) questioning the constitutionality of Republic Act 9227. The law doubled the compensation of members of the judiciary, the increase to be funded by the increase in court fees, instead of revenues from taxes. The law thus led to a substantial increase in court fees (500 percent in certain cases) and set a dangerous precedent by disguising "taxes" as "fees."

De Vera, together with several IBP governors and chapters, strongly opposed the withdrawal as a betrayal of the IBP objectives and its membership. To dramatize their protest, they staged a rally before Congress demanding repeal of the law.

Without meaning any disrespect for the high court, the issuance of the TRO may have been too harsh and precipitate. The second case was based on an earlier case which the Court had dismissed. The timing of the filing of the second (recycled) case and the expulsion was suspicious. The twin moves had the earmarks of an orchestrated, last-minute attempt to prevent De Vera from taking over the IBP presidency. As the duly elected EVP, De Vera should have been allowed to take over as IBP president, without prejudice to the cases proceeding independently. Or, the cases should have been resolved expeditiously.

Despite appeals for their early resolution, the cases remain pending, with one year of the two-year term already lost. A growing number of disgruntled IBP members feel that the IBP may have outlived its relevance by its failure to fulfill its mandate "to elevate the standards of the legal profession, to improve the administration of justice, and to enable the bar to discharge its public responsibility more effectively."

—**SENEN Y. GLINOGA,**
IBP, Quezon

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PAF ANNIVERSARY
Looking Beyond... Moving Ahead with Renewed Strength and Capability

POLITICAL billboard litter the countryside.

More dangerous than commercial billboard ads

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO REGUlate billboard ads because they are road hazards. This is a reasonable decision. But the government must also regulate, if not ban, all electioneering ads of politicians disguised as greeting materials and public service programs.

The billboard ads of politicians are the real road hazards since they are placed on electric posts, telephone wires, trees and even on road signs. Filipino politicians are known for their obsession to hang streamers everywhere in order to greet their constituents during Christmas, New Year, graduation, fiesta and even Valentines Day. The most trivial occasions are exploited by grandstanding politicians.

Perhaps the politicians think their smiling, ugly faces plus their greetings on cheap hanging streamers will make people forget their destitute lives and enjoy the illusion of a merry Christmas or whatever holiday the community is celebrating.

At least billboard ads have colorful designs and beautiful models. They also contribute to the revenues of the government and help propel the economy. But the politicians' ads are uncreative, unproductive and unnecessary. Improving the image of leaders is not bad.

Informing the public about the completion of road repairs or health centers is not appalling either. But is it right to boast that this infrastructure project X is a gift from councilor Y or senator Z when public money was used to finance the undertaking? Is it right to name government centers after incumbent officials? The kind of vanity perfected by our leaders is the cause of the misery of our long-suffering people and definitely a manifestation of *trapo* politics in the 21st century.

—**RAYMOND PALATINO,**
president,
Kabataan Party,
mongpalatino@gmail.com

Solving Sudoku by fading sunlight

I AM NOT WRITING ABOUT CRIME OR politics. I just wanted to thank the INQUIRER for including Sudoku on the comics page. Yes, Sudoku, that's it.

I am a US Peace Corps volunteer assigned to work in a beautiful, but isolated, rice-farming village in Palawan. Every afternoon, I look forward to the arrival of the jeepney bringing my newspaper from the town. So Sudoku—and often, together with the crossword puzzle—by the fading dusk or (occasionally) by electric light, makes the bulk of my evening entertainment.

(I also have to admit that Super is a Saturday pleasure. But please ask Tim Yap to entice Celine Lopez to come over from The Star.)

In summation, I'd like to thank the INQUIRER for Sudoku. I hope it stays in the paper for the length of my service here.

—**MICKEY KNOX, Coron, Palawan,**
qxj731@hotmail.com

Gov't should strengthen NPO

WHETHER THE CHARTER CHANGE movement succeeds or not, elections will be held—they could either be the regular, constitutionally mandated elections in 2007 or a plebescite on Cha-cha.

Whatever, the government needs the service of the National Printing Office and, therefore, the Senate should reconsider its stand on the budget of this office. Although I believe that the NPO has deviated from its normal function by becoming a mere agent or bidding office of government agencies for printing jobs, its budget should not be set aside so as not to affect the preparation of the printing of ballots for the forthcoming electoral exercise.

Removing from the NPO its exclusive jurisdiction (EO 378) over the printing of government standard and accountable forms, election ballots and other government paraphernalia, and placing the agency in competition with the private printers, just made irregularities easier to commit within the system. This is so because every time there is a work order, the NPO has to conduct a bidding. It is common knowledge to almost all government agencies and even to the private sector, that whenever there is a project, aside from the "SOP," under-the-table deals are prevalent. Unlike before, when the printing jobs of government agencies were automatically done by the NPO.

The government should scrap EO 378 and instead strengthen the NPO through the gradual upgrading of its printing machines and other facilities, including its manpower.

Likewise, NPO officials and employees should strictly observe office hours. They should learn the value of self-discipline—which certainly also means not accepting bribes and not entering into anomalous arrangements with private dealers.

—**JOSEFINO S. BISDA,**
National Printing Office,
Edsa, Corner NIA Northside Road,
Diliman, Quezon City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday July 04 2006

THEY WILL BE THE JUDGES. YOU WILL BE THE JURY.
Philippine Idol
ABANGAN SA JULY 29
ABC
Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				Nat'l Geographic	V League				Sentro	World's Most Amazing Videos	TNA Impact		Ultimate Guinness World Records		Big News	ALI			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	A Love To Kill	Nagmamahal, Kapamilya			Insider
AXN		Lost (Season II)		House		The Ultimate Fighter		Amazon		Andromeda (Season V)		World's Most Extreme Races		Alias (Season IV)		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Rescue Me (Season II)	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		The Simpsons - Double Episodes		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Dice	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinemax		Another You			Marnie				The Prosecutors			Innocent Blood				Two For Texas			Johnny Skidmarks
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense	Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence	Law & Order		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Surface		E-Ring		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unstoppable Bunny	Mickey Mouseworks	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Wicked Science Yr. 2	Phil Of The Future	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN			Tour De France 2006	Senior PGA Champ '06 Finals						Atlantic Coast Baseball: N Carolina vs Va Tech		Germany Tonight		Sportscenter Germany	Premier Snooker League '05				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Insider Weekend	Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 3		The O.C.3		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Blowout 2		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Super Saints	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Mirror Of The Soul	Lord, Have Mercy	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Good Code: The Natural Law	Cenacle Of Divine Mercy	Octavia Dies	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		On The Record w/ Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45PM)	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Endless Love I: Autumn In My Heart		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY		Love Of The Condor Heroes		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Empire (3:15 PM)						Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Doc Martin		Judging Amy					Judging Amy (11:45PM)
HBO		Before Sunset			The Molly Maguires							Carnivale 10: Damascus, NE	Carnivale 20: Outskirts, Damascus, NE	Something The Lord Made					
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Sorcerer Hunter	Soul Hunters	Lost Universe	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Sorcerer Hunter
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Serbis On The Go	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Global Family Series		ME TV		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics Amis	Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Late Show With David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	Late Show With David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Designer Remix	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	At Home With	Email Live		Boy Meets Grill	E! News Weekend		Look For Less	Martha		Napa Style	[illegible]	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
MTV Philippines		Pimp My Ride			MTV Hits (with SMS)					Get Spotted				TRL		Pimp My Ride			
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
Nat'l Geographic	Wildlife Diary	Nat'l Geographic Specials		Marine Machines								About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials					
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob Squarepants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Nick Kicks		The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PSO			Balweg				Duruta 30		[illegible]				Palanos Ng Pag-ibig				[illegible]		
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Scrapped Princess	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	Family Zoo		News On Q	Sana'y Muling Makapiling		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Arangkada News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	[illegible]		Australia's Next Top Model		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
SBN 21				Live Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Sony Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		[illegible]		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports			Boxing Greatest Classics			2006 US Open 9-Ball Champ		2006 Djarum Indonesia Open		2006 Djarum Indonesia Open		WNBA 06: San Antonio @ Los Angeles				Solar Sports Desk	NBA Access	2006 Thomas Cup Qtrfinals	
Sports Plus			Golf Today	FIFA World Cup '06 Quarterfinals						Rookie Manual	Nopi Tunervision 3	Ultimate Fighting Championship				World Poker Tour 2			
Star Movies				Cadillac Man (4:15 PM)				The Hard Easy (5:55 PM)			Soul Plane (7:35 PM)			The Parent Trap				The Last Shot (11:10PM)	
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Charmed		The O.C.		North Shore		Seinfeld	Charmed
Studio 23	Bewitched	Naruto				Batman Beyond	Monkey Typhoon	Sports	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville	Gilmore Girls		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

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Text us your feedback: Inquirer atn name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Assistant Editor* **Tony Bergonia**

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MILF declares Maguindanao ceasefire

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERAtion Front (MILF) has declared a ceasefire to save the peace process and to avoid the displacement of more people, a rebel spokesperson said yesterday.

Officials said the number of displaced persons has reached 20,000.

The hostilities started in Shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao on Wednesday last week after MILF rebels fired at government security forces serving warrants on two MILF commanders blamed for the June 23 explosion that killed at least seven people, according to Supt. Lumala Gunting, Maguindanao police chief.

The MILF has claimed otherwise.

Norie Unas, Maguindanao provincial administrator, said that from Shariff Aguak, the hostilities had spread to Datu Unsay Mamasapano, Datu Piang and Datu Saudi towns.

"We are addressing the needs of displaced families from these towns but we are worried of the long term effect of this conflict on the image of the province, its economy and on the people," he said.

But Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said unless attacked by government militia allegedly controlled by Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan, their guerrillas were told to stop firing effective Sunday evening.

He said the directive was issued by MILF chair Ebrahim Murad.

"They were told to maintain defensive position and should only fire their guns if attacks from the other side continue," Kabalu said.

Muhammad Ameen, Murad's aide, said in a statement that they were doing their best to normalize the situation.

He said the MILF disengagement plan revolves around a four-point premise namely—the MILF does not consider Datu Andal Ampatuan as an enemy; the MILF is willing to cooperate with the government in the joint investigation of the explosion through the mechanism of the ceasefire; to return the evacuees to their places of origins as soon as possible; and cease firing as soon as the Army-backed militias put a stop to their aggression in MILF areas or positions.

As this developed, government and MILF negotiators have also agreed to establish a peace zone in Shariff Aguak and nearby towns to allow people to return to their homes.

"Last night (Sunday), we met with the military and members of the International Monitoring Team (IMT). We discussed how we can defuse the fighting," Von al-Haq, MILF ceasefire committee chair, said.

Al-Haq said the peace zone will be maintained by peacekeeping forces that include the military and MILF rebels not involved in the four-day hostilities.

The IMT, which is led by Malaysia, is a body that oversees a truce between the MILF and government forces. It was created after the government and the MILF agreed to a ceasefire in 2001 as both sides pursued negotiations for a peace agreement.

Gunting said more policemen were also deployed to secure the national highway and the evacuees.

Auxiliary Bishop Colin Bagaforo, of the Archdiocese of Cotabato, has appealed to the warring parties to give civilians the opportunity to live in peace.

He said the problem between the warring parties could be better resolved in roundtable discussions.

"The fighting will not help in the peace talks. The important thing right now is to achieve genuine peace ... to talk and to reach an agreement on how this problem will not affect the people," he said. *Edwin Fernandez, Jeoffrey Maitem and Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Townsfolk's mood on war shifts from fear to anger

By Jeoffrey Maitem and Edwin Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

SHARIFF AGUAK, MAGUINDANAO—Even as mortar bombs explode from a distance, Oga Abloy says it's no longer fear that she feels but anger.

It's "anger against the violence that continues to wreak havoc on my life and my family," the mother of six children told the INQUIRER on Saturday.

Abloy said she had lost count of the number of times she and her family had to leave Barangay Iganagampong here for the last 19 years because of clashes between government forces and Moro rebels.

As she watched her grandchildren play inside the house owned by her landlord, Abloy delivered a clear message to the warring parties: Stop disturbing our lives.

"It's already nearing noon and we had not eaten breakfast yet. We do not have anything to eat because of this war," Abloy, a Muslim convert, said.

She gazed around the house. At least 30 people there had yet to eat, she said, because they did not have money to buy food.

500 families

By the latest count from social welfare officials, Abloy's family is among the more than 500 families forced out of their homes and livelihood when clashes between government forces and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels erupted on Wednesday.

Most of them subsistence farmers, according to Elsie Amil, provincial social officers.

Nearly in tears as she tried to figure out how to feed her family that day, Abloy said they would not be in a miserable situation if both sides did not go to war. "For the sake of poor people like us," she said.

Kagi Uram, a village official, said he narrowly escaped death when mortar shells landed on his rice field. He said the people had already grown tired of fleeing but the desire to live had forced them to abandon their homes anew.

"We were in this situation before, now here we are again. When will this conflict stop?" he said.

The situation appears to be worsening.

Mayors' militias

Mayors from Maguindanao's 27 towns have pledged to send more militia units to support the so-called antiterrorist campaign.

And the way the war is being conducted, the "terrorists" included MILF rebels, whose two commanders, Jamil Ombra and Sajid Pakiladato, have been blamed for the June 23 blast that killed seven people near the local public market.

Authorities said the target was Gov. Andal Ampatuan, who was travelling in a convoy of vehicles when the explosion occurred. At least 10 people were wounded.

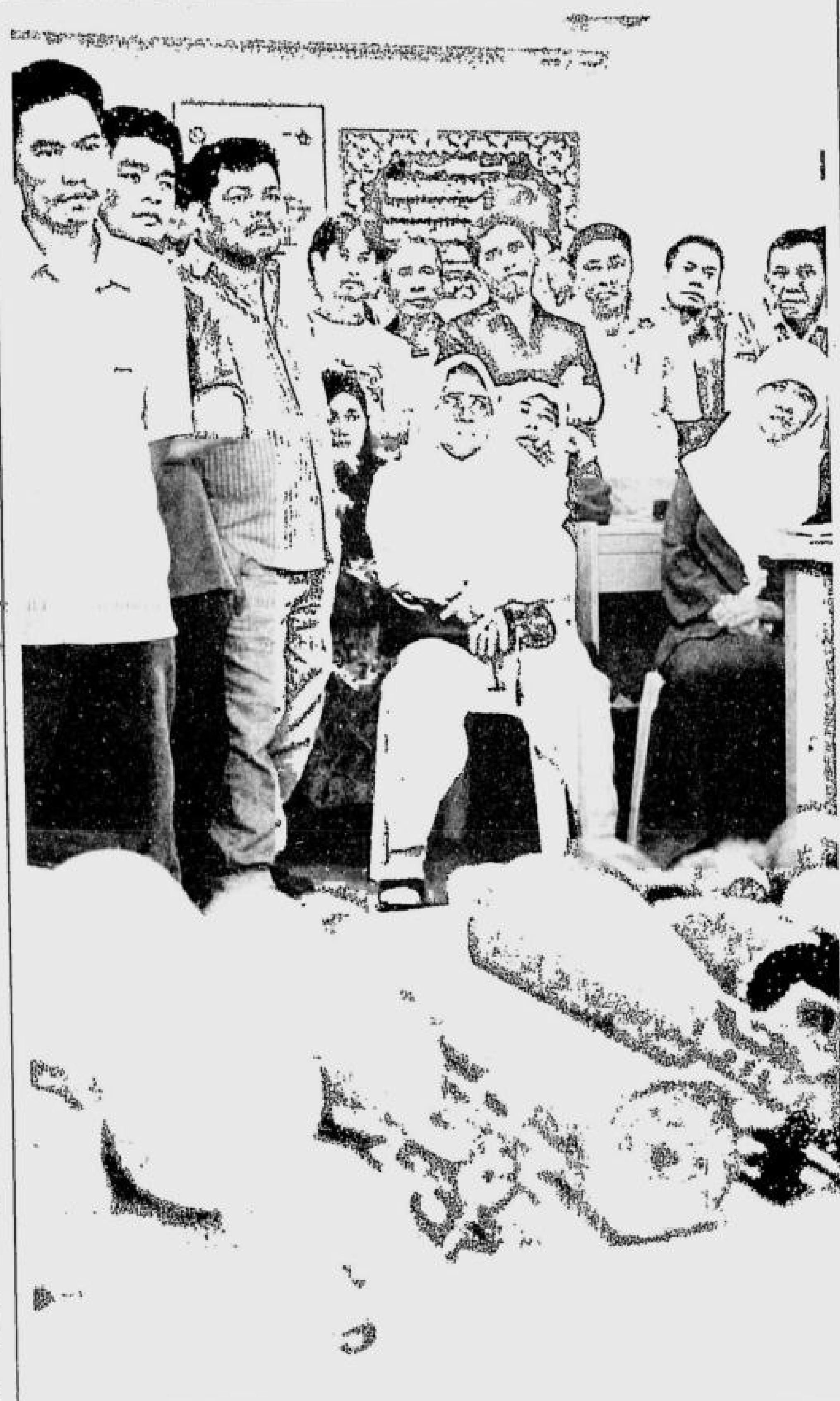
The MILF, which is talking peace with the government, has denied that its two leaders were involved in the bomb attack.

Provincial administrator Norie Unas said the mayors had declared that if the "terrorists" were not contained, they would carry out similar offensives against civilians.

"They did it to the provincial governor, they can always do it to anybody," Unas quoted the mayors as telling Ampatuan.

Officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao have offered P5 million for anyone who can provide information leading to the arrest of two other MILF commanders, Abdulwahid Tundok and Ameril Kato Umbra. Both are suspected of coddling local and foreign terrorists in their hideouts in Maguindanao, according to Unas.

"We are not blaming the MILF as an organization, but there are some people in it whose agenda transcend the common battle-cry of the organization," Unas said.



FAMILIARIZATION
BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU
The Muslim community in Davao City was shown different types of bombs and explosives that could be used in terrorist acts during a lecture conducted by the Army's Task Force Davao. The military is seeking the help of the Muslim community in its war on terror.

Execs say town is no war zone

HAGONOY, BULACAN—REFUTING reports that their town had been turned into a war zone with the presence of government troops, local officials declared here they would not allow any abuse from the military or the communist New People's Army.

During Mass in front of the municipal hall here on Monday, Mayor Felix Ople said the local government is in full control of the situation and is doing its best to protect the residents.

He said the local officials are keeping the communication lines open as they assert their role as mediator between the military and the militant groups.

"As long as the military and the militants respect the authority of the local officials, there will be peace and order here," he said.

He also appealed to the media to be extra careful in reporting accounts placing Hagonoy as an embattled town. "These reports (on alarming presence of the military in Hagonoy) are not true," he said.

"These reports may affect the business here. We hold this ecumenical Mass to seek divine intervention for peace and order not only for Bulacan but for the whole country," he added.

According to Ople, the military has put up detachments in only five of 26 barangays in Hagonoy. He also said no atrocities or human rights abuses have been reported in the town.

Military detachments manned by seven to eight personnel have been established in the coastal villages of Tibaguin and Pugad and in Barangays Sagrada Familia, San Pascual and Mercado.

Military detachments have long been set up in Barangays San Pedro (Hangga) and Iba. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ROUNDUP

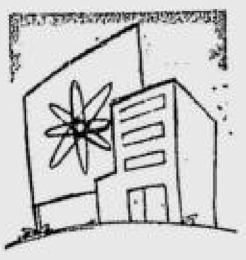
2 car theft suspects held

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two alleged members of a car theft syndicate, including an employee of the Land Registration Office (LTO), were arrested by members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in an operation in Gen. Mariano Alvarez, Cavite over the weekend, police said yesterday. Senior Supt. Gil Blanso Lebin, CIDG-Calabarzon director, identified the suspects as Redentor Centeno, 43, employee of the LTO office in Pasay City, and Jose Marco, 23. The two were arrested in a police raid inside Centeno's house at about 5 p.m. last Saturday in Barangay Pulipo, Gen. Mariano Alvarez town. Lebin said the operation was part of their anti-car theft project dubbed as "Oplan Clean Sweep."

Cops nab 5 rob suspects

CALAMBA CITY—Five suspected highway robbers were arrested by the police shortly after victimizing passengers of a jeep at a business district here on Sunday, police said yesterday. Supt. Roland Bustos, city police chief, identified the arrested suspects as Efren Montecillo, 50; his brother Romel, 26; Ramil Umar, 38; Virgilio Correa, 44; and his brother Dexter, 22. Bustos said they received information that a jeep bound for Tanauan City, Batangas was held up by the knife-wielding suspects at about 5 a.m. after passing at the central terminal in Crossing, Calamba. He said he sent a police team to check on the report. Along a national highway in Barangay Real, six suspicious-looking men alighted a jeep and suddenly ran in different directions. Policemen caught up with them and they turned out to be the holdup suspects.
Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Camarines IT park



CAMARINES Sur Gov. Lray Villafuerte expressed optimism that the information technology park established by the provincial government would become a major hub for the information and communications sector not only in the Philippines but in the Asia-Pacific region as well. The Camarines Sur Information Technology Park, which is in a 5-hectare portion of the 118-hectare provincial capitol complex, was established in 2005, and was granted a special economic zone status by the Philippine Special Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) in March of the same year, the first-ever LGU-run and operated information technology park in the country granted such a status. Two weeks ago, Villafuerte led a delegation of senior provincial government officials and IT consultants on a promotional tour in the United States. The group traveled to key US cities, particularly those where major American IT firms are based.

299 new cops welcomed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—The Calabarzon police yesterday welcomed 299 new police recruits in simple rites held at this camp. Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, Calabarzon police director, led the oath-taking ceremonies of the new police officers as he reminded them of the tough challenges ahead of them. The newest batch of police personnel, who took their oath in front of their relatives, included 39 women who underwent the same arduous three-month training as their male counterparts.
Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Police file raps vs suspect in Boracay murder

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—POLICE HAVE FILED CRIMinal charges against suspects in the killing of a resort owner on Boracay Island last month.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) filed robbery with homicide complaint on June 27 at the Aklan Provincial Prosecutors Office in the capital town of Kalibo against Jesus Palbaquer, 26, of Sagay City in Negros Occidental and an unidentified suspect.

The complaint was backed by affidavits of eight witnesses, said SPO4 Reynaldo Francisco, CIDG Aklan team leader.

Palbaquer, a townmate and former employee of the victim, remains at large.

Investigators said the testimony of witnesses and other pieces of evidence point to Palbaquer as the alleged killer of resort owner Araceli Villanueva-Hug.

Hug, 48, and married to a Swiss national, was found dead inside her room on the third floor of the family-owned Bamboo Beach Resort last June 20. Her body bore multiple stab wounds.

Members of the resort staff said they saw Palbaquer, leaving the resort compound around the time the murder was believed to have been committed.

Medical group helps Puerto Princesa tribes

By June Diokno
Contributor

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—AS soon as the sun colored the early morning skyline with a tequila hue on June 24, 2006, tens of thousands of residents here boarded every kind of vehicle at the city coliseum to form a caravan for the Irawan watershed.

Irawan was the site of the celebration of the 16th year of the Pista y ang Cagueban or Feast of the Forest, an annual mass mobilization aimed at rehabilitating the forest.

The Pista attracted droves of people from all walks of life bound by a love for nature, and none joined more willingly than the tribes from indigenous communities like the Tagbanua and the Batak.

The civic group, Operation Tulong took advantage of the festival to embark on a parallel mission. Members came to plant not only tree seedlings but also "seeds of benevolence" with their "Gamutan sa Kagubatan."

Volunteers of Operation Tulong, headed by DZRH veteran radioman Andy Verde, went to Irawan to provide free medical and dental help to the Tagbanua and Batak, who live in isolation in settlements on the mountain slopes of Cleopatra's Needle. The tribes are closest to the forest, but they pay a price for their idyllic existence—they have no access to the medical and health care that are easily available to city folk.

Operation Tulong doctors set up a tent-clinic complete with boxes of medicine and eyeglasses at Irawan for their Gamutan. On one side Dr. Danny Detera, dentist and Operation Tulong senior officer, manned his dental clinic.

One by one the tribal folk were examined and given treatment by volunteer doctors where necessary. At the eye clinic, those with poor sight were fitted with free eyeglasses.

(The author, a film director at a Manila advertising agency who occasionally makes short films and documentaries, participated in the Pista and the medical mission. He said he was touched deeply by the experience.—Ed.)

Mining permits issued by gov, says labor group

By Norman Bordadora

A LABOR GROUP YESTERDAY urged the filing of usurpation of authority charges against Bulacan Gov. Josephine de la Cruz for allegedly issuing mining permits in her province's quarry sites.

Dave Diwa, president of the National Labor Union, alleged that De la Cruz has arrogated upon herself the power of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to issue permits and licenses to small-scale miners in the area.

Diwa said the cases of plunder and economic sabotage filed by Rosemoor Mining and Development Corporation (RMDC) against De la Cruz last February showed that she had issued small-scale mining permits and environmental compliance certificates, to facilitate the theft of marble from the quarry site of RMDC.

De la Cruz answered the accusation and said it was not true.

"It is impossible. We are in fact rationalizing all the small-scale mining permits now," said De la Cruz.

Refused to answer

The governor, however, refused to answer the other issues raised against her by RMDC.

Diwa said that among those to whom De la Cruz issued permits were eight mining firms sharing the same business address.

"Obviously, these are fictitious mining firms," Diwa said.

RMDC, through its president Dr. Lourdes Pascual, has filed plunder and economic sabotage charges against De la Cruz for her alleged role in the theft of rare tea rose marble from the RMDC property in Mt. Nabio.

"Pascual alleged that De la Cruz plundered the quarry and duped the country of revenues from the marble mines through the Tea Rose Mining and Development Corp. and other allegedly illegal miners.

In an affidavit, Pascual alleged that De la Cruz benefited since 1999 from the theft of tea rose marble from the quarry site operated by RMDC.

The case is now pending at the Office of the Ombudsman.

Diwa said he received information that Director Angel Bravo of the Bureau of Mines has written letters to De la Cruz to inform her that her issuance of ECCs and permits was illegal.

Pascual also accused De la Cruz of harassment by requiring RMDC to secure a small-scale mining permit from the Bulacan government.

RMDC has a permit to quarry from the DENR.

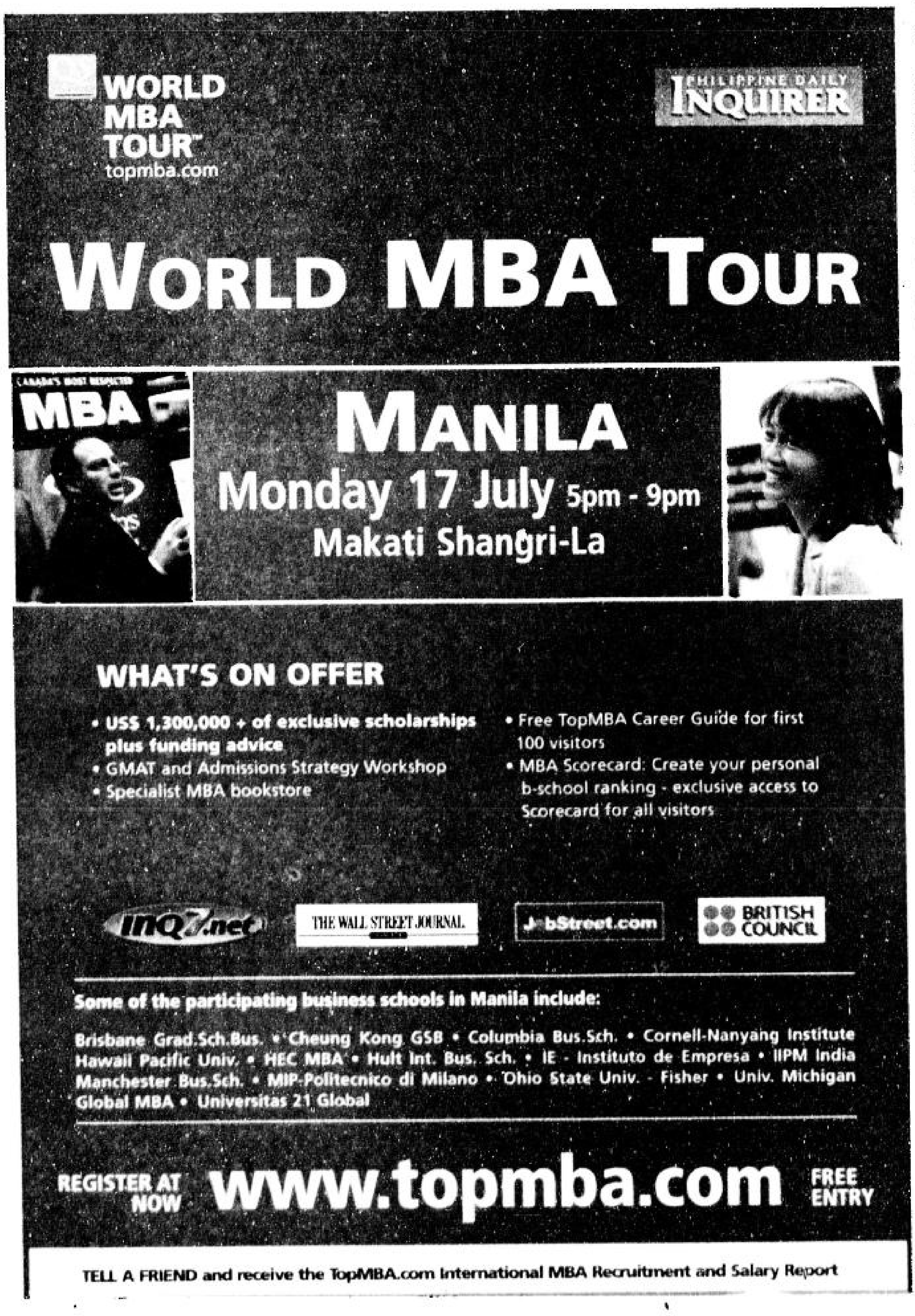
Mining rights

Sources say that De la Cruz and her husband, Roger De la Cruz, established the Tea Rose Marble Corp. to wrest Rosemoor's mining rights and give it to small-scale miners under their control.

Tea Rose Marble Corp. is headed by Dela Cruz's former provincial administrator Onofre Sebastian.

According to Rep. Federico Sandoval, De la Cruz prevented Rosemoor from quarrying and transporting marble from October 2004 to November 2005, during which illegal miners associated with her, including one Rodante Pascual [later on killed by members of the New People's Army], raided the MPSA site of RMDC.

The quarry site of RMDC is outside the delineated national park as Proclamation No. 401, signed by ex-President Corazon Aquino, reclassified parts of Biak Na Bato as a mineral reservation. RMDC's quarry site is inside the mineral reservation as delineated by Proclamation 401. *With a report from Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



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New growth area seen to rise as 94-km highway project links 2 former US bases

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A 94-KM, FOUR-lane highway is being built to pass though mountains and agricultural plains in nine towns and two cities in Bataan, Pampanga and Tarlac.

From end to end, this leads to the Subic Bay Freeport or to the Luisita Industrial Park. In between is the Clark Special Economic Zone.

If the road links those three economic powerhouses and puts a huge airport, a seaport and hundreds of offices, factories, warehouses, and recreation centers to cut travel time by 30-40 minutes, what might become of the areas along the route?

Businessman Renato Romero anticipates a "new growth area" to rise from the periphery of the upcoming Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx).

"In-between corridor" is what Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan, chair of the Subic-Clark Area Development (Scad) Council, expects to happen at the borders of SCTEx.

They foresee that coming to Dinalupihan and Hermosa towns in Bataan; Floridablanca, Lubao, Porac and Mabalacat towns, and Angeles City in Pampanga; Bamban, Concepcion and Lapaz towns, and Tarlac City in Tarlac.

But to Romero and Pamintuan, it is not the nearness of these towns and cities to the highway that is going to spell the main difference for them.

The synergy, especially of Subic and Clark, and the resolve of local governments will make or break this opportunity.

As US military bases, Subic and Clark operated as an integrated sea-air base complex in the Asia-Pacific. Converted as ecozones in 1992, they ran independently of each other until June 2004.

In her State-of-the-Nation Address then, President Macapagal-Arroyo sounded off the second phase of the bases conversion program.

Most competitive

Subic and Clark, she said, would become a single corridor and the "most competitive international service and logistics center in the Southeast Asian region."

How important that is can be gleaned from the plan's inclusion in the Arroyo administration's 10-point agenda.

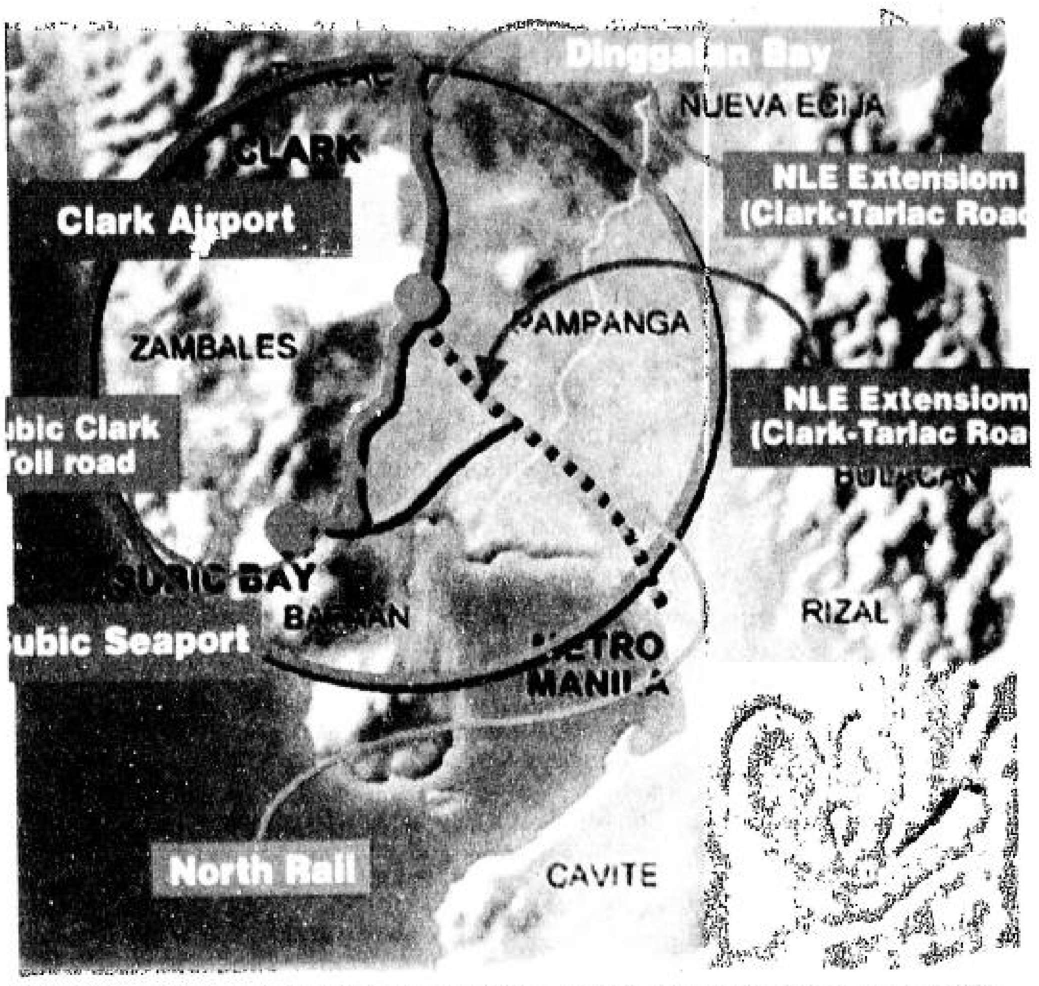
"That's the whole context of the SCTEx, to be the backbone for that new economic corridor in Central Luzon," said Pamintuan.

A lot is at stake.

Although the government left it to the private sector to rehabilitate the North Luzon Expressway, it took the burden of incurring a P21-billion loan from Japan to finance the SCTEx.

To further boost the fusion of Subic and Clark and their main facilities—Subic's seaport and airport and Clark's Diosdado Macapagal International Airport—the government took a $1-billion loan from China to build the Manila North Rail System to link Clark to Metro Manila.

Earlier, the government tapped Japan for a $215-million loan to build the Subic Bay port.



MAP of the growth axis centered on the unification of Clark and Subic through the SCTEx.
FROM BCDA

Global gateways

Pamintuan said these funds were being used to develop Subic and Clark as "global gateways" for Central Luzon.

The highway is less than 40-percent finished and is set to open in December 2007, said Narciso Abaya, president of the Bases Conversion Development Authority, the proponent of the SCTEx.

Subic and Clark cover a combined area of nearly 100,000 hectares. Large parts are forests, in the case of Subic, or disputed areas, in the case of Clark's sub-zone.

It is Subic that's starting to run out of space in its main zone, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Administrator Armand Arreza said.

The land-use plan of Clark's 4,400-ha main zone (its 2,500 has covered by the airport) has been revised for optimum use of space, said Antonio Ng, president of the Clark Development Corp. (CDC).

SCTEx growth area

Pamintuan said a study began during the time of his predecessor, Francisco Licuanan III, looked into the potentials of setting aside industrial parks for electronics, garments, information and communications technology, furniture and agri-logistics.

The concept is largely about having a "land bank."

"There will definitely be an onslaught of economic activities. Even without prodding, local governments shall have their own initiatives [to complement the objectives of Subic and Clark]," he said, when asked to why his office has not yet convened local governments to help them plan.

Ready?

What worries Romero, as chair of the Advocacy for the Development of Central Luzon (ADCL), is the lack of planning.

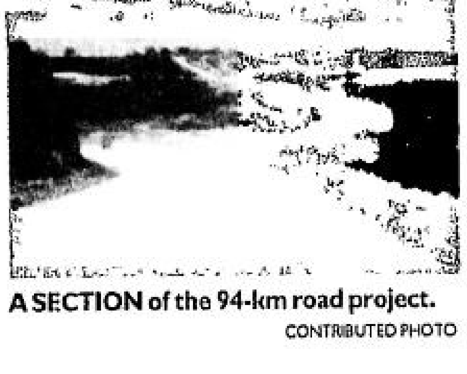
"They have not yet put their acts together to formulate a common plan to enable them to fully seize the opportunities," he said.

"We have been trying to encourage them to create their niche in the new growth area. In the near future, Subic, Clark and Luisita will be full of investors and investments will spill over to the vicinities of the local areas. We have to start preparing now or else we will miss the boat," Romero said.

He said local governments could align their development plans with those of the three eco-zones. Or they could revise their land-use zoning plans and improve the incentive climate by reducing the cost of doing business.

Romero said it would be in the best interest of residents and the business sector to identify problems that would arise from the pressures of migration and demands for resources like land and water.

It would be best to start identifying what a particular town or city was going to specialize in so that investments could be directed there and there would be no undue competition, he said.



A SECTION of the 94-km road project.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Initiatives

The mayors have not been lacking in initiatives, though.

Dinalupihan Mayor Joel Payumo said the reclassification of land from agricultural to residential, commercial and industrial uses has been done.

Some residential subdivision projects have started to absorb the need for housing in Subic.

Because his town is nearest to Subic, the idea of putting up industrial parks in Dinalupihan is not immediate. The town will set aside land when Subic runs out of space for new industries.

Floridablanca Mayor Darwin Manalastas said the town's land-use plan is being reviewed.

In the short-term, the local government has asked the BCDA to repair barangay roads that were damaged during their use as access to the SCTEx's construction site.

Porac Mayor Exequiel Gamboa said he believed his town, the nearest to Clark, was prepared to take on the challenges.

A new land-use plan has been approved, specifying which areas are to be devoted to agricultural or light industries.

Talks with businessmen have identified what new ventures are possible.

Gamboa said it helped that the government in 2004 complete the Porac-Angeles Road amid Mount Pinatubo's lahar. New municipal roads are being built and one heads straight to the volcano to encourage tourism there.

Tarlac Mayor Genaro Mendoza said the tourism council and two business chambers were closely coordinating to prepare a plan defining actions that will optimize the prospects from SCTEx.

Like Olongapo City Mayor James Gordon Jr., Mendoza said he had ordered the training of workers and out-of-school youth on skills needed for new investments.

The SCTEx, Mendoza said, would enhance mobility to where the jobs were. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), Tarlac Training Center, and the Tarlac State University are offering new curriculums attuned to the demands of the labor market.

IN THE KNOW

THE GOVERNMENT acquired a 41.93-billion-yen soft loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation in 2001, which is 85 percent of project cost. The other 15 percent will be covered by the BCDA equity contribution.

The Subic-Clark section spans 50.5 km. The Clark-Tarlac section stretches a total of 44 km. The project involves the construction of three major bridges—Gumain and Pasig-Potrero in Pampanga and the Sacobia-Bamban in Tarlac. Several interchanges, 36 minor bridges, 218 culverts, 13 overpasses, 51 underpasses and toll booths will be built.

SOURCE: BCDA

As these are undertaken, Mendoza wanted to ensure that agricultural areas were retained and their production enhanced. The Subic port may help in exporting crops, he added.

While the Pampanga capital of San Fernando is out of the way of the SCTEx, Mayor Oscar Rodriguez has proposed an interchange linking the city to and from the new highway.

Aside from being the traditional gateway to Subic and Clark through the Gapan-San Fernando-Olongapo Road, the city is a major service area, hosting at least 100 banks—more than 50 regional government offices and major commercial establishments.

Rodriquez said almost every aspect of governance—from traffic management, sanitation, business licensing, land-use regulation and labor training—was being improved to make San Fernando competitive in the Subic-Clark order.

Not another mess

Rufo Colayco, said to be among the early principal architects of the Subic-Clark axis, believed that "if properly planned and managed, [the new corridor] could become a modern, efficient venue for all sorts of product and service industries able to compete in the global markets."

Colayco, a former BCDA and CDC chief, said that in order to ensure this desired result, "it is essential that the principal road arteries and land-use patterns be defined from the start. Otherwise, the exercise would merely create "another sorry mess like Metro Manila."

Borra says he's ready to face impeach raps

From page A1

were still being investigated, according to assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni.

Opposition legislators said it was not fair to single out Borra because all those who took part in the contract should be charged.

Collegial decision

Asked if he should not be the only commissioner blamed for the scandal, he said, "Precisely, because this is a collegial body's decision."

"[S]o why am I singled out? … This is lamentable," he said.

Apart from Borra and Abalos, retired Commissioners Luzviminda Tancangco, Rufino Javier, Ralph Lantion and Mehol Sadain, and current Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr. approved the contract on April 15, 2003.

To avoid raising questions that some Comelec officials were being spared, the Ombudsman should release the findings on who should be held liable for the poll automation deal, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday.

"The Ombudsman should make a complete finding and evaluation. Right now it gives rise to another suspicion that Borra is being made a scapegoat because the report or the recommendation appears in installments as admitted by the Ombudsman herself," Gonzalez told reporters.

He said that if the Office of the Ombudsman found no reason to indict the others, it should say so.

"If there's no evidence against the others, declare it already. As long as you say we're still not finished, it will give rise to that suspicion," Gonzalez said.

Motion for reconsideration

Abalos met with Borra and other Comelec commissioners behind closed doors in the morning to discuss the Ombudsman's findings.

Borra later disclosed that the second part of the meeting was to be held and concluded today, after which the Comelec would give its official position.

However, in a separate interview, Abalos said the Comelec would file a motion for reconsideration in the Office of the Ombudsman.

"We will raise points that they (Ombudsman's investigators) never saw," he said, adding that the commission was throwing its support behind Borra and the other poll officials.

Abalos, who said he himself signed the contract after it was approved by the en banc, reiterated his position that the automation contract was validly awarded.

He noted that the automated machines were not defective and that the Comelec was not given the opportunity to defend itself in a court trial.

Inexplicable haste

That the Supreme Court did not issue a temporary restraining order, which allowed the poll body to go on with the purchase, only showed that there was nothing wrong with the contract, according to Abalos.

In its decision voiding the Mega Pacific deal, the Supreme Court said:

"The Comelec awarded this billion-peso undertaking with inexplicable haste, without adequately checking and observing mandatory financial, technical and legal requirements. It also accepted the preferred computer hardware and software even if, at the time of the award, they had undeniably failed to pass eight critical requirements designed to safeguard the integrity of elections."

In December last year, the Senate demanded the resignation of all but one of the election commissioners for the "egregiously fraudulent" contract for the 2003 purchase of the automated counting machines.

Commissioner Felix Brawner was not asked to resign because he had yet to be named to his post at the time.

The bids and awards committee (BAC) was in charge of the awarding of the contract and was independent from the commission regarding that aspect, according to Abalos.

All of the five members of the BAC have retired except two: Eduardo Mejos and Bartolome Sinocruz Jr., current heads of the Comelec finance and human resources departments, respectively.

Borra said his involvement as commissioner-in-charge of the modernization program was only in the implementation of Phase 2, which pertained to automated counting and canvassing. *(See In The Know)*

Turn state witness

Impeachment proponents and two petitioners in the voided Mega Pacific deal called on Borra to turn state witness against President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is facing a fresh impeachment complaint.

The anti-Arroyo groups, however, pressed for the criminal prosecution of Abalos and the rest of the Comelec commissioners.

Leah Navarro of the Black and White movement said Borra was being used as a "fall guy" by the administration for candidly admitting in a Senate inquiry last year that the 2004 elections were marred by cheating.

"We implore you, Sir, think hard and search your heart. We have an impeachment complaint. We need all the help. Don't let them make a fool of yourself," Navarro said.

Augusto Lagman and Maricon Akol hit the "selective prosecution" by the Ombudsman, saying it could be part of the "continuing cover-up" to protect Ms Arroyo.

Lagman and Akol—two of the petitioners who had sought to invalidate the automation deal before the Supreme Court—want judicial proceedings, not a political process like impeachment for Abalos et al. because they allegedly committed a crime. *With a report from Nelson F. Flores*

IN THE KNOW

ELECTION COMMISSIONER Resurreccion Borra, who faces possible impeachment, was in charge of the second phase (automated counting and consolidation of votes) of the planned automation of the 2004 elections.

There were three phases in the plan: Computerized registration and verification of voters, automated counting and consolidation of votes, and electronic transmission of election results.

The Supreme Court scrapped in 2002 the P6.6-billion contract for the computerization of the voters' registration list, which was awarded to the Photokina group in 2000. Congress reserved only P1 billion for the project.

Election Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco was head of the modernization committee that endorsed the voters' registration project to the Commission on Elections.

The second phase was not implemented because of the Supreme Court's decision in January 2004 to nullify the P1.3-billion contract between the Comelec and Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. The high court said the Comelec disregarded the law and its own bidding rules when it awarded the contract for the automation of the counting and canvassing of ballots to Mega Pacific.

The bids and awards committee (BAC) was then headed by director Eduardo Mejos, with Gideon de Guzman, Bartolome Sinocruz, Lamberto Llamas and Jose Balbuena as members.

But even before the BAC issued its recommendation that the contract should go to Mega Pacific, the Comelec had come out with an en banc resolution on April 15, 2003, awarding the contract to the company.

The Comelec en banc at the time was composed of Chair Benjamin Abalos and Commissioners Borra, Tancangco, Florentino Tuason Jr., Rufino Javier, Ralph Lantion and Mehol Sadain. Tancangco, Javier, Lantion and Sadain have retired.

The contract was finally executed in May 2003 and notarized the following month. It was signed by Abalos and Mega Pacific president Willy Yu.

In December 2005, the Senate blue ribbon committee chaired by Sen. Joker Arroyo echoed the Supreme Court decision, saying it found that the BAC had manipulated the bidding to favor Mega Pacific. The committee also held Abalos and the six commissioners accountable for awarding the contract to the company.

Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research

Malacañang, bishops tangle anew on impeachment case

From page A1

one impeachment case against the Chief Executive per year.

Last year, Ms Arroyo's dominant allies in the House killed a move to unseat her over charges she rigged the 2004 presidential elections. She has denied the accusations.

The same charges were renewed last week, along with additional claims she had engaged in systematic political killings of activists and journalists.

One of those who signed the impeachment complaint last week was Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez.

Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, CBCP spokesperson, said the Iñiguez complaint conformed with the pastoral statement the bishops issued in January prescribing measures to allow Ms Arroyo to resolve questions of legitimacy surrounding her presidency.

Clergy must be involved

Yesterday, the CBCP president, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, said that Malacañang should not invoke the principle of separation of Church and state "as an argument against the participation and involvement of the Church in shaping the politics of our country."

"Concretely, this means that the bishops, clergy and laity must be involved on the area of politics when moral and gospel values are at stake," Lagdameo said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye replied: "The charges raised on impeachment are not morality issues but plain and simple political harassment leveled against the highest office in the land."

Bunye said the Palace had always respected the CBCP head, but on bishops joining anti-Arroyo forces filing an impeachment complaint, "we beg to differ."

This is the second time in a week that the Palace and Church leaders have clashed on matters of interpretation.

Malacañang earlier touted Pope Benedict XVI's "well done" message to the President during her call at the Vatican last week as extending to Ms Arroyo's plan to change the Constitution and adopt the parliamentary system— a move seen by her opponents as a way out of the worst political crisis of her 5-year-old administration.

But several bishops said the Holy Father had only referred to the abolition of the death penalty.

CBCP meeting

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Malacañang would closely monitor the CBCP's semiannual meeting this week, specifically if the group would formally endorse the impeachment complaint.

"Let's not pit the CBCP and Malacañang against each other. Maybe (Bishop Iñiguez) did it as an individual Filipino but I'm hoping that would not be the official stand of the CBCP where he is a member," Ermita said.

Ermita also referred to the opposition initiative.

"It was only last year that they filed their impeachment complaint, now I heard they are planning to file one hundred and one cases and this I think will make them lose their value more," he told reporters.

Ermita said the opposition should realize that Filipinos were "not that naïve not to understand their actions and that these are all just part of politics."

UN to get involved

Also yesterday, opposition Sen. Jamby Madrigal said the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) had expressed concern over reports of growing cases of human rights abuses under the Arroyo administration.

She said that Ambeyi Ligabo, UNHCHR special rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinions, had told her during her visit to the UN agency's headquarters in Geneva that "when the Philippines comes under peer review, it will be under tight scrutiny" and that it will have to explain what is going on in the country.

The Association of Major Religious Superiors of Women in the Philippines (AMRSP) also issued a statement at the close of its biennial convention in Batangas on Thursday critical of the Arroyo administration.

The AMRSP said it was "horrified, enraged, saddened and indignant" over issues ranging from killings of activists and journalists to the purported "deception and manipulation" of the people to accept an initiative to amend the Philippine Constitution. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Christian V. Esguerra*

Pacquiao gets Palace Hall of Fame award

From page A1

"We draw inspiration from great fighters, like Manny Pacquiao, who can knock down the obstacles along the way and win the bout against all odds," Ms Arroyo said in a statement.

"As the entire nation stood still in yesterday's big fight at the Araneta Coliseum, I could not help but dream that one day, we would see the same passion in the hearts of our leaders and all Filipinos in supporting a common vision of the future."

Edible gloves

Pacquiao is also set to receive a new commendation from Congress, which in 2003 awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor after he beat Mexico's Marco Antonio Barrera.

Ms Arroyo also gave Pacquiao an *empanada* in the shape of real-sized boxing gloves, a takeoff from the glove *empanadas* the Palace chef cooked up in the January tribute.

The *empanada* drew a smile from the boxer.

Just like in his previous visits, Pacquiao was mobbed by Malacañang employees and media members eager to have their pictures with him.

Pacquiao said he was happy to see that Sunday's fight had united his countrymen, as his fight six months ago did.

"If it's possible, I'll fight every day just to see them like that," Pacquiao said.

Echoes of Ali

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Pacquiao deserved the "Champion for Life" award because he had given the Philippines an international honor.

"You'd probably notice that there is no other boxer that is talked about or written about more than Manny Pacquiao. He is a real standout in international boxing and this has brought great honor to the Philippines," said Ermita, who compared the buzz on Pacquiao to the popularity of Muhammad Ali.

A different tribute

Based on EO 540 signed on June 13, the rank of "Champion for Life" shall be given to individuals who win outstanding achievements in international events in sports, beauty and similar fields of competition, and achievements that foster extraordinary national pride and inspiration toward excellence.

Ms Arroyo decided to create the new rank in the Honors Code—the first rank was Bayani or Grand Cross, whose recipients include taipan Alfonso Yuchengco and Fr. James B. Reuter—to fill a void for honoring champions in those fields.

Before the Palace ceremony, ordinary Filipinos gave Pacquiao more down-to-earth honors when he rode in a triumphal motorcade through 23 streets of Manila.

For many residents, time virtually stood still as they postponed their lunches, skipped classes, or left work to catch a glimpse of "Pacman."

Politicians, everywhere

From City Hall to Chinatown, through the slums of Tondo and other parts of the city, people showered their modern-day hero with non-stop cheering and applause.

The champ shared a float with fellow fighter Jimrex Jaca, who also did the country proud by whipping Mexican Hector Marquez in the undercard of the Pacquiao-Larios match.

Hitching themselves on the two boxers' triumphs, local politicians vied for public attention.

Flanking the boxers were Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, Rep. Miles Roces and Presidential Adviser on Youth and Sports Arnold "Ali" Atienza. Behind them stood a bevy of councilors and other officials.

'Victory for the people'

But the chants from men, the shrieks from teenage girls, and the applause from employees hanging out of office windows belonged only to the ring warriors.

Many in the crowd, including squatters perched on rooftops, snapped pictures of the celebrities, using their cell phone cameras.

Confetti rained down on Pacquiao and his entourage when they arrived at City Hall.

"Thank you for the prayers for my victory," Pacquiao, an adopted son of Manila, said in Filipino. "I offer my victory to the people. I love my country and I'm proud to be a Filipino."

Pacquiao said he would resume training at the end of the month for his rematch with Mexican Erik Morales in November. *(See related story in Sports, Page A21)*

"The training will have to be all out. Morales is a fighter of a different caliber," Pacquiao said of the tough Mexican, whom he thrashed in 10 rounds in January to avenge a 2005 defeat.

Most endangered crocodiles found in RP

From page A1

Glenn G. Rebong, project director of the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center, said the last count of adult Philippine crocodiles in the wild was less than 100, giving the species a critically endangered status.

"The next 10 years is critical for the survival of the Philippine crocodile … Hopefully, the government will give us enough funds," Rebong said in a phone interview yesterday.

The Philippines is a member of the CSG, a global network of biologists, wildlife managers, researchers, government and nongovernment organizations, traders, fashion leaders, and private companies working to save the world's 23 living species of alligators, crocodiles, caimans and gharials in the wild.

The Philippine crocodile has been considered the most endangered species for several years now, Rebong said.

Habitat loss

"The crocodiles have vanished mainly because of human activity and habitat loss. The wetlands are being polluted, forests are degraded so they're losing their habitat and source of food," he said.

The rescue center was once the Crocodile Farming Institute created in 1987 as a joint undertaking of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Japan International Cooperation Agency to prevent the further decline of the two known species of crocodiles in the Philippines.

From 235 stocks of Philippine crocodiles collected from the wild in 1987, the center now has 1,100 stocks of the species.

This, however, does not change the endangered status of the Philippine crocodile as it is based on its population in the wild and the rate of decline over the years.

The saltwater crocodile, which can grow up to 22 feet in length, is also found in Australia, Papua New Guinea and other parts of Southeast Asia.

The freshwater Philippine crocodile, however, is endemic to the country. It is found in Palawan, Dalupiri Island, Abra, northern Sierra Madre and certain parts of Mindanao. Its average length is six feet and lives up to 60 years.

Shy, not dangerous

"It's a very shy type of crocodile, not that dangerous as people think … Unlike the bigger saltwater crocodile, the Philippine crocodile has no documented record of attacking humans," Rebong said.

The negative perception of people on the danger posed by crocodiles, however, has contributed to its near-demise. The term "*buwaya*" is used to refer to greedy people in government or in basketball games. Much has to be done on public awareness of crocodile conservation, Rebong said.

The rescue center is exploring areas in the Philippines where the Philippine crocodiles propagated in the facility could be eventually released into the wild and protected.

"Many protected areas here are not really protected," he said.

Since the agreement with Japan expired in 1994, the crocodile farm has been solely managed by the DENR. It expanded its conservation efforts beyond crocodiles and was renamed Palawan's rescue center in June 2000.

Private funding needed

Because of lack of funds, the government is keen on tapping private firms or individuals to take up conservation efforts of the endangered crocodiles.

"We want to pass on technology to the private sector and let them develop it (crocodile farming) as an industry," Rebong said.

One local government in Mindanao has expressed interest in creating a crocodile sanctuary similar to the one in Isabela, but discussions are still ongoing.

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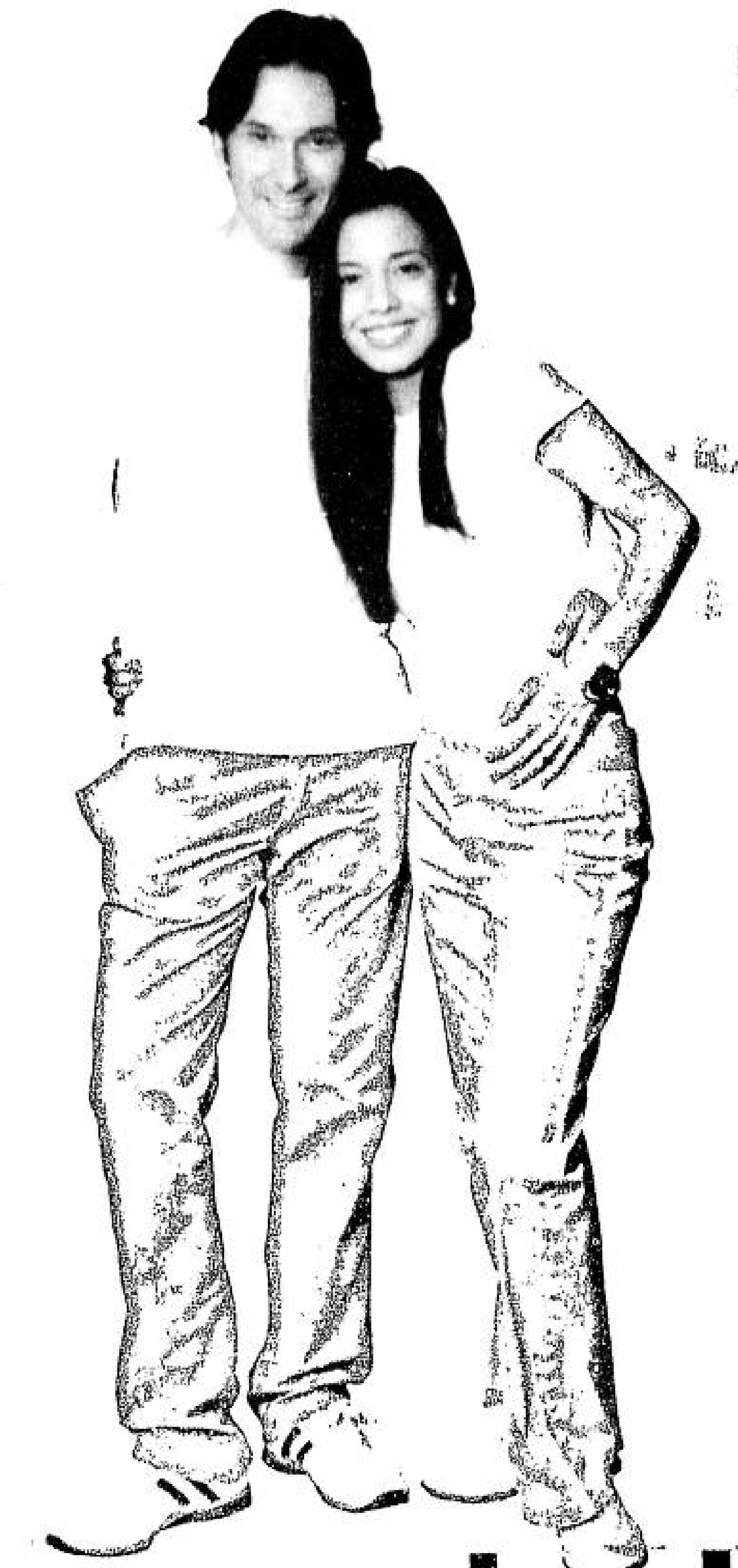

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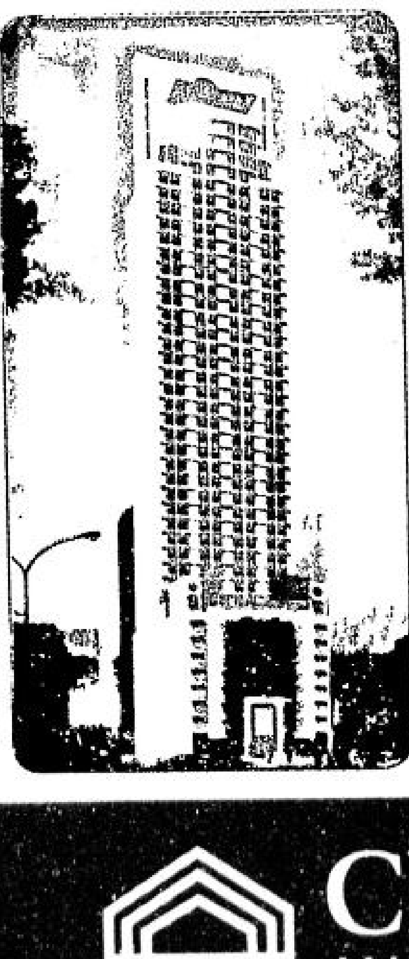

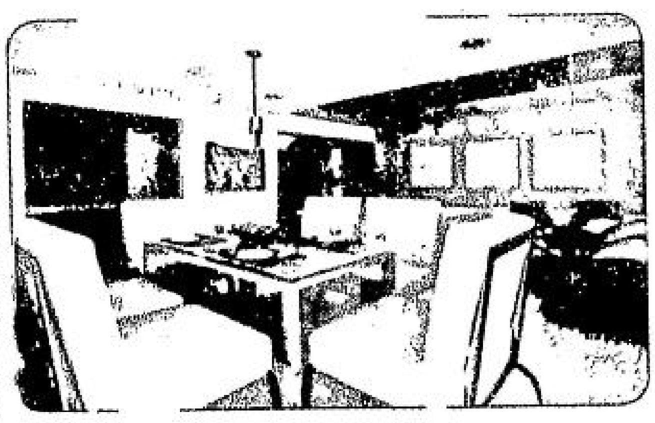

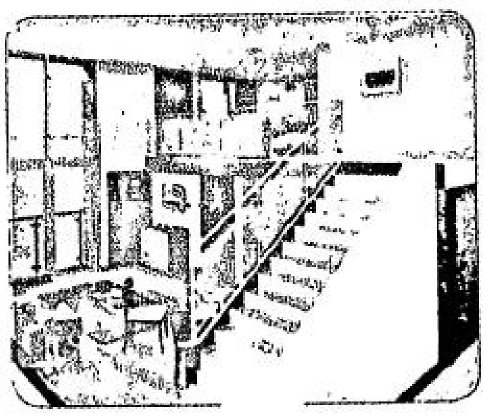

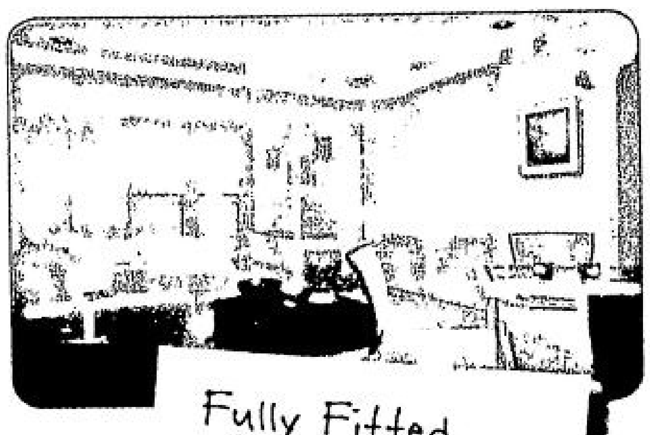

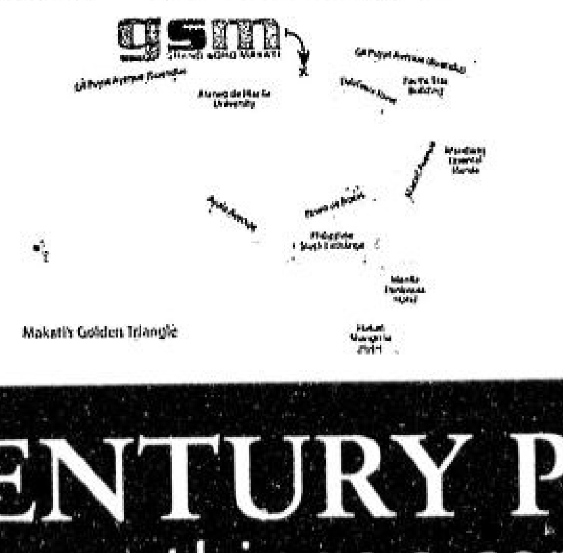

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Cops bust robbery gangs using minors

Groups preyed on jeepney-riding commuters in Quezon City

By DJ Yap

TEN YOUTHS, INCLUDING TWO minors and three women, were arrested on Sunday night after they were accused of involvement in a series of robberies aboard passenger jeeps in Quezon City.

The suspected thieves were caught in separate police operations following the arrest of three of their leaders at around 8:15 p.m.

Responding to a commotion at the corner of Aurora Boulevard and 20th Avenue, members of the Quezon City Police District criminal investigation division caught the three in the act of robbing jeepney passengers, police said.

The suspects were apprehended after a brief chase, but a fourth one identified only as "Butch," who was carrying the loot, managed to get away, according to a report by case investigator PO1 Jerry Godes.

The three were Jumbo Isidro, 18; Edgar Daluma and a 16-year-old boy.

Through the help of eyewitnesses, seven more suspects were arrested in follow-up operations on the same day, Godes said.

They were Juanito Santos, 26; Erick Tandoc, 21; Raymond Legazpi, 18; Jay-R Enriquez, 18; Jovylyn Lagarto, 18; Dolores Cruz, 21 and a 15-year-old girl.

Godes said they were identified by at least seven complainants who were robbed in three separate incidents on the same day. But Mercy, Legazpi's mother, said her son was wrongly accused of being part of the group.

She added that her son was pushing a scrap cart at the time of the incident. Godes, however, said one of the complainants positively identified Legazpi and even remembered the shirt he wore during the robbery.

Police recovered a kitchen knife, a fan knife and a cellular phone from the suspects. But the rest of the complainants' stolen possessions were not recovered.

Taguig high school has a new principal

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TEACHERS OF THE TAGUIG National High School expressed relief yesterday after the Department of Education (DepEd) designated a new principal for the school.

Dr. Judito Camacho was appointed officer-in-charge in place of Dr. Eleonor Abisado who had been accused by the teachers of misappropriating school funds, lacking in school management skills and of being insensitive to their welfare and development.

Bernadette Bautista, president of the school faculty, said things have gone back to normal at the school following Abisado's departure. Abisado is now with the DepEd-Taguig division office.

"There has been a big improvement in our school. There are no longer armed men roaming around and the school's electricity and water supply have resumed," Bautista told the INQUIRER over the phone yesterday.

A group of 100 protestors, which included teachers, students and their parents, held a rally to demand Abisado's ouster when classes opened last month.

Abisado, however, dismissed the allegations, describing these as "baseless and politically motivated."

"We are really thankful that the DepEd heard our plea. We can now perform well in our jobs," Bautista said.

Blaze 2nd time around sends firemen running

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FIREMEN WHO SPENT SUNDAY afternoon battling the blaze that razed an upscale furniture shop in Makati City rushed back to the site yesterday when the flames re-ignited.

Fire investigator SF01 Samuel Guzman said they were called back to the MC Home Depot at the corner of Edsa and Pasong Tamo at around 8 a.m. yesterday—or barely six hours after putting out the fire.

"Our backs had barely touched our beds when we had to rush back to the site," said Guzman who was among those at the scene after a fire broke out at 4:55 p.m. the other day inside the Muebles Italiano, a furniture shop at the ground floor of the depot.

Firemen immediately put out the blaze that damaged P15 million worth of property.

The cause of the fire has not yet been determined, although there were reports that it an overheated computer inside the shop could be the cause.

"But another witness said they heard a small explosion from one of the circuit breakers in the shop," an investigator told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Guzman, meanwhile, said the establishment had no emergency lights, fire hose cabinet and water reservoir.

"If all those things were there, the fire would have been contained immediately," he added.

Flexible Fuel Vehicle

ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY CAR
People check out a flexible fuel vehicle on display yesterday at an exhibit set up by the Marikina City government to promote the use of alternative fuel. The car is the first in the country to run on fuel that is 80 percent gasoline and 20 percent ethanol. ROGER CARPIO

BENJAMIN Olalia, a former vice mayor of Ilagan, Isabela, went to the Quezon City police yesterday to clear his name following allegations that he masterminded the killing of Ilagan Mayor Delfinito Albano. RAFFY LERMA

Lawyer linked to Albano slay surfaces

By DJ Yap

EVEN BEFORE POLICE COULD tag a suspect in the murder of Mayor Delfinito Albano of Ilagan, Isabela, a former vice mayor of the town surfaced yesterday to deny rumors that he was the mastermind.

Benjamin Olalia met with Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr., Quezon City Police District director, to clear his name following allegations about his involvement in the killing of Albano last week.

Olalia said local media reports had made what he called "unfair references" to his family in the investigation of Albano's murder, adding that these could be a "diversionary tactic" by the real culprits to mislead investigators.

Accompanied by lawyer Oliver Lozano, Olalia clarified that he was not turning himself in but "voluntarily appearing" before the authorities to categorically declare his innocence.

Albano was shot repeatedly by bonnet-clad gunmen before midnight on June 27 inside a bar at the corner of Scout Santiago and Dr. Lazcano Streets in Barangay Laging Handa, Quezon City.

Olalia, 70, said he did not have a political or personal tiff with the Albano clan, least of all Mayor Albano, who, he said, regarded him as his political mentor.

At one point, Olalia, who has retired from politics but is still a practicing lawyer, said he even served as Albano's campaign manager when the latter ran for mayor in 2000.

He added that Albano was his "*compadre*" as the slain mayor was the wedding sponsor of his son Harold when he got married in December 2003. He added that he also enjoyed a "harmonious" relationship with Albano's brother, Energy Regulatory Commission chair Rodolfo Albano.

Olalia told police he heard the rumor that he wanted Albano killed because he considered the mayor a suspect in the killing of his son, Benjamin Olalia Jr., in October 2004.

But Olalia said he had never implicated Albano in the murder of his son.

METROBRIEFS

Taxi drivers nabbed

TWO taxi drivers who allegedly extorted money and threatened to abduct the child of a rich Chinese businessman were arrested by Manila policemen in an entrapment operation yesterday. Insp. Cesar Teneros of the Manila Police District-Special Operations Group (MPD-SOG) said suspects William Teng, 54, of Binondo and Valentino Samson, 56, of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, were caught red-handed receiving marked money from complainant Kit Ting Chong, 56, of Caloocan City. Investigation showed that the suspects were former emloyees of the complainant who owns more than 50 taxis. Chong told police that the suspects had been calling him, threatening to kidnap one of his children if he would not give them P50,000 each. After negotiation, the amount was lowered to P30,000 and later to P15,000. Agents of the MPD-SOG immediately formed a team and arrested the suspects who were charged with robbery extortion and grave threats.

Margaux C. Ortiz

More blood donors

THE PHILIPPINE National Red Cross yesterday urged the public to celebrate Blood Donor's Month this July by helping the organization boost its supply of safe blood and save lives in the process. "The theme for this celebration is 'I am a blood donor and I save lives'," PNRC Secretary General Corazon Alma de Leon said in a press conference in Manila. PNRC Governor Rosa Rosal said they are considering the creation of a Blood Samaritan Program, wherein the poorest of the poor could also benefit from the organization's services. "With the program, people who could not donate blood for health reasons could give cash to help poor people avail of PNRC's blood supply," Rosal said.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Quiason matriarch remembered

THE CLAN of former chair Serafin Quiason of the National Historical Institute marks today the 10th anniversary of the death of Teofista Henson Danganan vda. de Quiason, a teacher for 35 years. Ms Quiason taught American history to students at Torres, Mapa and Gregorio Perfecto High Schools. A widow at 28, she put her two sons, Serafin, a Ph. D. from the University of Pennsylvania and Camilo, former Supreme Court justice, through college, on her small salary as a teacher.

Mandaluyong policeman shot dead with own gun

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IN BROAD DAYLIGHT AND IN front of customers eating inside a fast food in Pasig City, two armed men shot to death a Mandaluyong City policeman yesterday afternoon.

The killers apparently even used the policeman's 9 mm service firearm in shooting PO2 Eliseo Versoza at least eight times, investigator PO3 Enrique Jimenez told the INQUIRER.

The motive for the killing was still undetermined. The suspects took the policeman's handgun but did not touch his black wallet containing more than P11,000 or his mobile phone, PO3 Sandy Baybayon also said.

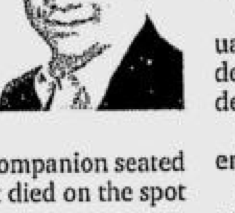
Versoza, 38, was sitting outside the Tropical Hut Restaurant at the corner of Shaw Boulevard and Pioneer Street in Barangay San Antonio at 2:25 p.m. when a man beside him pulled out a .45-caliber handgun and started shooting him.

The police said the other killer could have grabbed Versoza's 9 mm handgun and shot him several times.

The killers then casually walked away and hopped on a red motorcycle, where another companion was waiting, according to a tricycle driver who saw the incident. Versoza was rushed to the hospital where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

Dishonest provincial cops

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo



EVEN POLICEMEN IN THE provinces, once considered more honest than their counterparts in Metro Manila, have been bitten by the bug of dishonesty.

The family of Rodolfo Areza, 48, one of those who died in a vehicular accident in Calauag, Quezon, complained to this writer that most of the cash Areza was carrying was lost.

Areza left his house at Barangay K-6 in Kamias, Quezon City, with four relatives in a Honda Civic at 3:30 a.m. of June 26. They were bound for Sorsogon.

Areza was carrying P200,000 in cash intended for a *banca* he would buy for another relative in Sorsogon.

Their car had a head-on collision with a bus on the highway in Calauag at about 7:30 a.m.

Areza and a companion seated on the front seat died on the spot while the other passengers were severely injured. The car was a complete wreck. Barangay tanod who were first at the scene turned all the money, including Areza's Rado watch and the victims' cellular phones, to the policemen who arrived later.

"*Ang kapal ng pera sa wallet at sobre na ibinigay namin sa mga pulis* (There were thick wads of money in the wallet and in an envelope that we turned over to the police)," Danny Areza, the victim's brother, quoted one of the tanod as saying.

You know how much SPO1 Eduardo Escobar, the investigator, declared he recovered at the accident scene? P8,650.

Rodolfo Areza's watch and other belongings were missing.

Escobar and the other cops who were at the scene should be investigated.

***

The "war" between Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales and Collector Ricardo "Ding" So of the Manila International Container Port is making life difficult for smugglers allegedly enjoying protection from the collector.

Morales wants So replaced for alleged inefficiency. But a temporary restraining order from a court prevents him from yanking out So and other collectors Morales deems are performing below par. Even if the court's order expires soon, Morales still has to reckon with the powerful Iglesia ni Cristo which allegedly recommended So to this much-coveted post. So is a member of the powerful sect.

Morales is making life hard for So by going after the latter's alleged smuggler-friends who use the MICP.

Morales wouldn't have stooped down to the level of quarreling with his subordinate if he had been given the power to replace non-performing collectors with trusted subordinates.

The customs chief's hire-and-fire power should be absolute.

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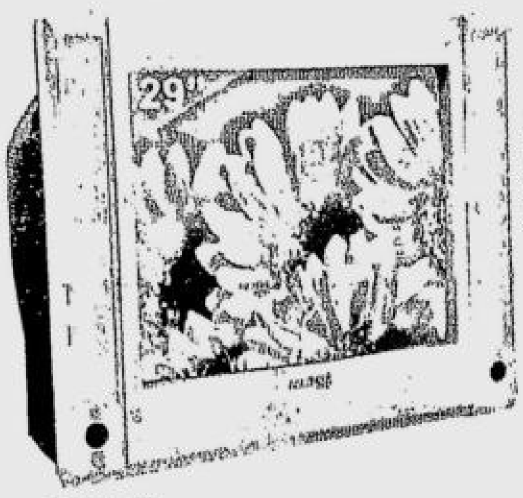

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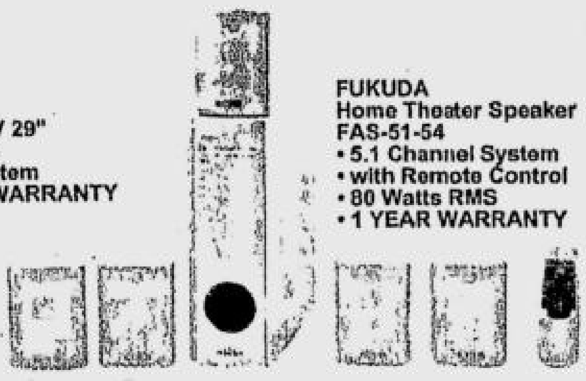

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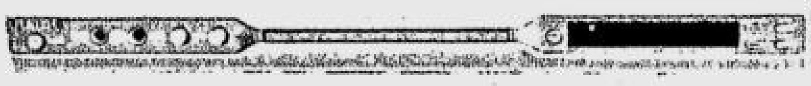

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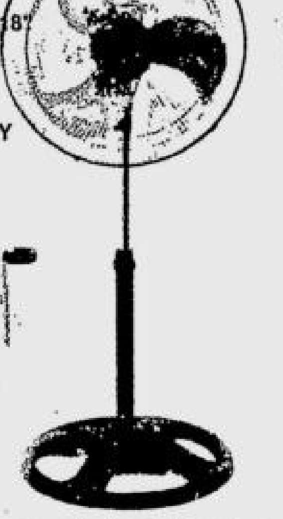

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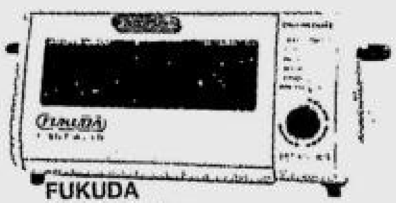

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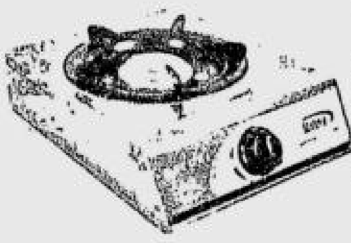

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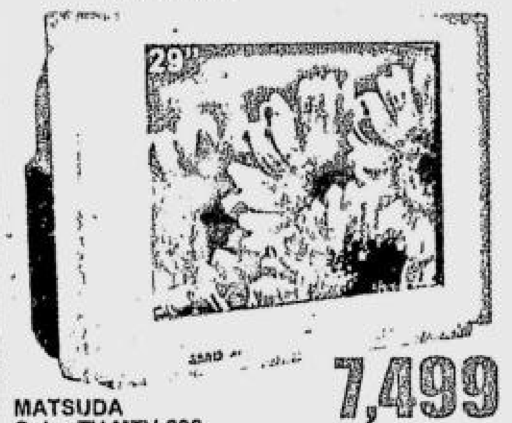

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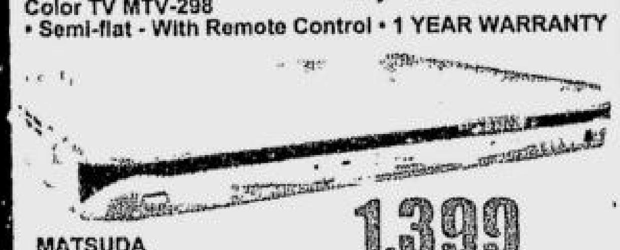

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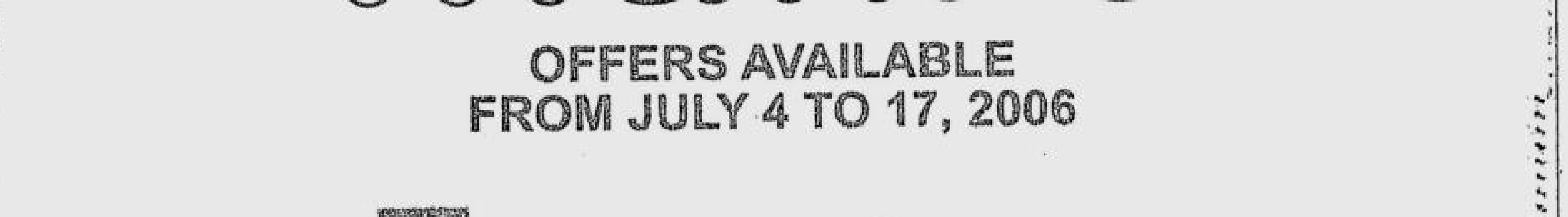

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Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

2 rivals declare victory in Mexico race

MEXICO CITY—TWO BITTER RIVALS DECLARED themselves Mexico's next president and electoral officials said they wouldn't name a winner for days, sparking cries of fraud and fears of violence as Mexicans waited Monday for a tedious vote-by-vote hand count.

A conservative bureaucrat and a leftist were separated by fewer than 300,000 votes with more than 30 million counted in a preliminary tally by electoral officials. With results tallied from 81.7 percent of polling places, Felipe Calderon had 37.02 percent to Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's 35.90 percent.

But the Federal Electoral Institute stressed those results weren't final—and said it wouldn't declare a victor until an official count it wasn't even starting until Wednesday.

In the meantime, both candidates declared victory, raising questions about their pledges to respect an electoral process in which Mexicans invested hundreds of millions of dollars to overcome decades of systematic fraud.

"We have no doubt that we have won the presidential election," Calderon told supporters.

"Smile: We've already won," Lopez Obrador told his.

"We're going to defend our triumph. We aren't going to let them try to make our results disappear," Lopez Obrador assured thousands of cheering supporters gathered under a steady rain in Mexico City's enormous Zocalo plaza.

"Lie! Lie! Fraud! Fraud!" the crowd chanted.

A drawn-out period of uncertainty could rock financial markets and unsettle Mexico's maturing democracy.

Tensions were already running high after a two-year campaign marked by vicious personal attacks. Calderon painted Lopez Obrador as a radical leftist who would ruin the economy, while Lopez Obrador called Calderon a liar who doled out million-dollar favors to a brother-in-law while serving as energy secretary.

The campaign exposed Mexico's deep class divisions, with Lopez Obrador of the Democratic Revolution Party pledging to govern for the poor and Calderon, of the ruling National Action Party, seen by many as the candidate of the rich.

Many feared the close result could cause the tensions to explode. *AP*

MEXICAN presidential candidates Calderon (right) of the National Action Party and Obrador of the Democratic Revolution Party. AFP

Beijing-Tibet train completes maiden run

By Alexa Olesen

ABOARD THE BEIJING-LHASA Express, China—China's first train from Beijing to Tibet was making the final leg of its journey Monday on the world's highest railway, climbing to such high elevations that pens and packaged foods aboard burst in the thin air.

Some passengers breathed piped-in oxygen from tubes as the train crossed Tanggula Pass at 5,072 meters (16,640 feet) in Tibet's Tanggula Mountains, which the government says is the highest point on any of the world's railways.

Tibetan antelope and wild donkeys grazed beneath stunning vistas of snow-capped mountains and deep-blue skies as the train rolled through the treeless, sparsely populated region.

The $4.2 billion (euro3.4 billion) railway is part of efforts to develop China's poor, restive west and bind it more closely to the booming east. Chinese leaders hope greater prosperity will help to still calls by Tibetans and other ethnic minorities for autonomy from the communist Beijing government.

The line has prompted protests by activists who say it will bring an influx of Chinese migrants to the isolated Himalayan region, threatening its ecology and diluting its unique Buddhist culture.

COMPLETED last October, the 27-billion yuan ($3.3 billion) line to Lhasa is one of the world's highest railways, crossing mountain passes up to 5,000 meters high, with about 80 percent of the line above 4,000 meters. AP

Trains completed shorter trips on the line between Lhasa and Golmud while passengers on the 16-car train from the Chinese capital were in the midst of their journey.

State media gave heavy coverage to the railway, with newspapers publishing front-page photos of passengers singing and villagers waving to the passing train. The state television midday news showed President Hu Jintao congratulating workers who built the line.

Before the last leg of the trip to Lhasa, the train stopped in Golmud early Monday to switch its standard engine for three powerful locomotives required to haul the train at high altitude.

Passengers included a 2 1/2-year-old boy, a 78-year-old man and a group of ethnic Tibetans newly graduated from the Beijing Police Academy who were headed home to work as police officers.

One Tibetan passenger asked a Western reporter what the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, thought of the train. The man, who asked not to be identified by name, said that with China's Internet monitoring, it was too dangerous for him to search news websites for the information himself. *AP*

Seized file shows careful planning for Bali bombing

By Raymond Bonner

JAKARTA, INDONESIA—THE bombs should be small and placed in day packs, making them harder to detect. The bombers should dress like tourists. They should not bother targeting hotels because security is too tight. Instead they should consider restaurants, discos and theaters.

A thorough survey should be done in advance by the bombers themselves. This way, they are more familiar with the sites, and no one is left behind to be hunted later by the police.

"There is no escape plan because the perpetrators will become martyrs," the planning document states. "They will go to the targets and not return."

This is the minute-by-minute choreography of a suicide bombing. Indonesian police uncovered the document from the computer of one of the planners of an attack last October in Bali that killed 20 people, when three men walked into separate restaurants and blew themselves up with day packs loaded with explosives.

The document, experts say, offers a rare glimpse into the minds of terrorist plotters and the kind of meticulous planning that lies behind even a relatively simple operation. The schedule in Bali even provided for 20 minutes for the bombers to pray.

The 34-page document, titled "The Bali Project," was found on the computer of Azhari Husin, a Malaysian engineer educated in Australia and Britain who became a master bomb maker and was one of the most dangerous terrorists in Southeast Asia until he was killed in a shootout with the police last November.

The document was given to The New York Times by a person who requested anonymity because it has not been officially released. It was first reported on by Tempo, an English-language weekly newsmagazine here.

The author, who the police say they believe was Azhari himself, begins by asking, "Why Bali?" Because it will have a "global impact," he answers. "Bali is known around the world, better than Indonesia itself," the author writes. "An attack in Bali will be covered by the international media."

In Section 2, "Method of Attack," he notes that the plan must differ from the first attack in Bali, in October 2002, when a minivan loaded with explosives was detonated in front of two nightclubs, killing 202 people.

Now, "security is tighter," the author writes. *NYT*

Militants give ultimatum as Israel moves on Gaza

GAZA CITY—PALESTINIAN MILITANTS HOLDING an Israeli soldier captive issued a 24-hour ultimatum Monday for Israel to free prisoners after the army kept up its military assault on the Gaza Strip.

But the demand was immediately rejected by Israel, which sent troops and tanks into northern Gaza on Monday and launched a sixth straight night of air raids to pressure the Palestinians into handing over the soldier.

"Faced with the Zionist enemy's persistence in taking military measures and aggressions, we give it a delay expiring Tuesday, July 4 at 6 a.m.," said a statement from three groups that seized the teenage conscript in an attack on an army post eight days ago.

"If the enemy does not meet the demands we laid out in our previous statement ... we will consider the matter closed and the enemy will be responsible for all results," said the statement from the Popular Resistance Committees, the armed wing of the ruling Hamas movement and the Army of Islam.

The government of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, which has a force of 5,000 troops massed on the Gaza border, has so far rejected demands by militants for the release of Palestinian prisoners in its jails.

"We are studying the statement and for the moment are sticking to the official position expressed by the prime minister rejecting any negotiations with the kidnappers or giving into any blackmail," an Israeli military official said.

The latest salvos in the escalating Middle East crisis followed threats by the armed wing of Hamas—boycotted as a terror group by Israel and the West—that it would strike civilians in Israel if the Gaza offensive is not halted. *AFP*

HAND of an Israeli soldier leans on a magazine as troops prepare to enter the Gaza Strip. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Clouds force 2nd shuttle launch delay

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.—Bad weather forced Nasa to postpone the launch of the space shuttle Discovery on Sunday for the second consecutive day, with the next launch attempt set for Tuesday. The decision to cancel liftoff came minutes after the seven crew members boarded the spaceship, even before the vessel's hatch was closed. Hours before, Nasa forecasters had estimated only a 30-percent chance that weather would favor launch, as thunderclouds menaced the Kennedy Space Center. *Reuters*

Saddam daughter, wife in wanted list

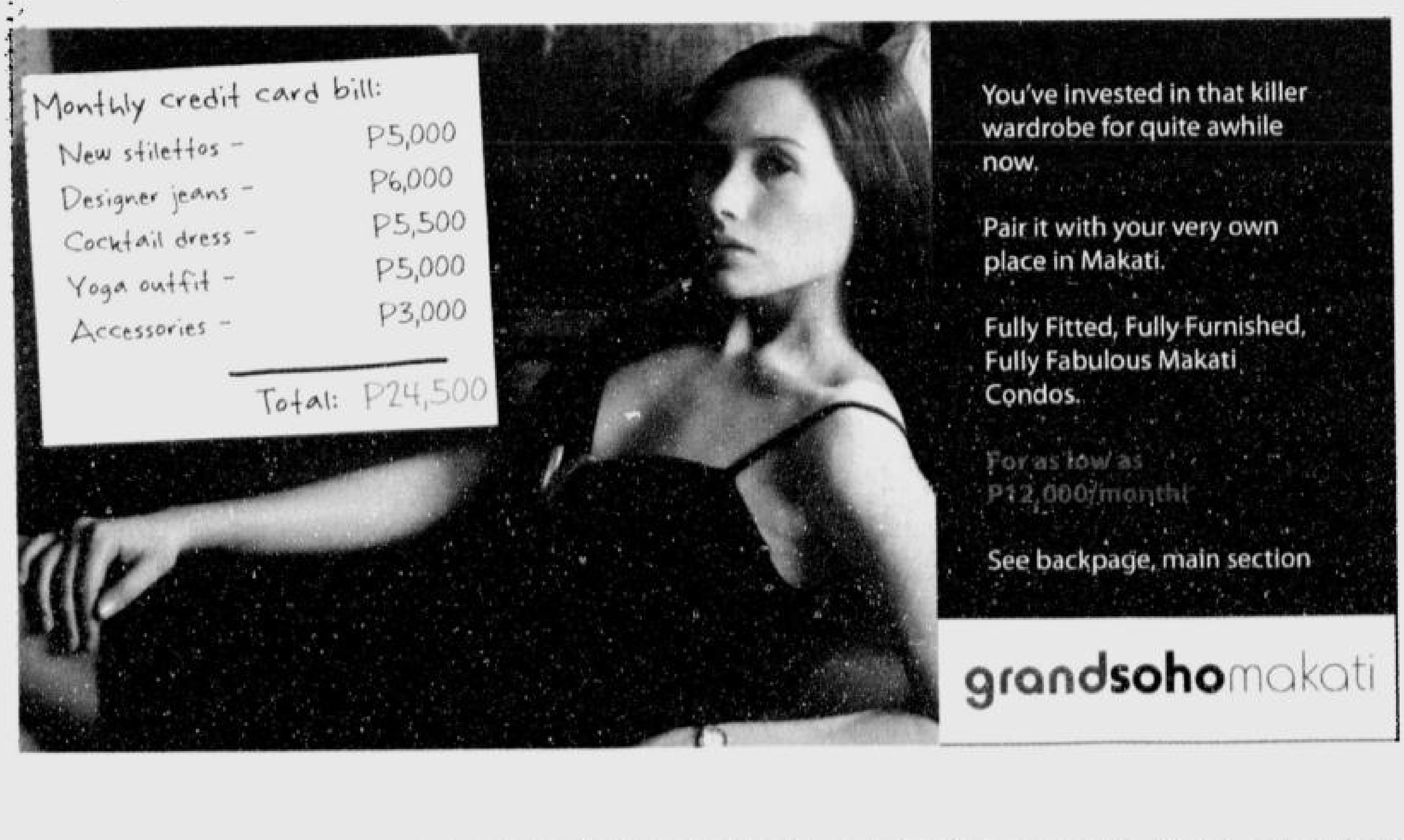
BAGHDAD—Iraq on Sunday named Saddam Hussein's eldest daughter and first wife on a most-wanted list along with top Baathists and al-Qaida's new leader in Iraq, a day after the bloodiest bombing in three months killed over 60. The 41 "most wanted" list, which offers a $10-million bounty for former Saddam deputy Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, accuses Saddam's daughter, Raghd, and her mother of using millions stolen by the former Iraqi leader to finance Sunni insurgents. Raghd has taken a leading role in organizing her father's legal defense in his trial for crimes against humanity. Aged about 40, she lives in Jordan having been granted asylum there. Her mother Sajida is also on a list that includes the new head of al-Qaida in Iraq, Abu Ayyub al-Masri. The government also offered a $50,000 reward for Masri—far less than the $5 million the United States placed on the man named by Osama bin Laden to succeed Zarqawi. The low sum may be intended to insult. Reuters

Cheaper US calls because of Internet

COMPETITION in the phone business, intensifying this year as Internet-based calling has taken root, has reached the point where many industry experts anticipate an era of cheap and even free calls. "People are going to look at voice communications as something they expect to get for free," said Henry Gomez, general manager of Skype, which eBay bought last year for $2.6 billion. The company usually charges a few cents a minute for calls from computers to regular phones, but in May it eliminated those fees through the end of the year for users in the United States and Canada. New competitors, including the major cable companies and start-ups like Vonage and SunRocket, are putting intense pressure on traditional phone companies like AT&T and Verizon, which are discounting heavily and pushing packages of more advanced services. In 2005, the number of subscribers to Internet-based calling services nearly tripled from the year before, to 5.5 million, or about 3 percent of the overall market. By 2010, the research firm TeleGeography expects Internet phone providers to win about a quarter of the traditional local phone business. *NYT*

Aussie trader jailed for rabbit torture

SYDNEY—A Sydney financier was jailed Monday for at least 12 months for torturing to death at least 17 rabbits and a guinea pig, whose mangled bodies were found in the city's business district. Brandan Francis McMahon, 37, was imprisoned after Downing Centre Local Court rejected his defense that he was affected by the drug "ice" at the time the offenses were committed. New Zealand-born McMahon had pleaded not guilty to 18 charges of aggravated animal cruelty relating to dead or severely injured animals found at or near his Sydney office in July and August 2005. Many of the apparently bludgeoned animals had broken skulls, wounds to their genitals and eyeballs falling from their sockets. *AFP*



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WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Big four brace for semis push /A23

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■ Sorenstam, Hurst return to play one more day/A23

Pacquiao 'a tiger' in Morales tiff

By Roy Luarca

MANNY PACQUIAO TOOK PITY on Oscar Larios that he allowed him to last 12 rounds when they fought on Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

"*Naaawa ako sa pagmu'nukha niya. Nababaitan ako sa kanya* (I pity him. He looks nice to me)," said Pacquiao of Larios.

But against Erik Morales, come November 18 in Las Vegas, Nevada, Pacquiao said he will be all bite, all fury.

"He (Morales) will see the eye of the tiger," said Pacquiao in an interview with the anchors of GMA-7's "Saksi" newcast yesterday. "He's been saying nasty things about me."

Pacquiao was reacting to Morales' published remarks that the Filipino icon didn't really hit hard, insisting that it was exhaustion that sent him down on all fours during their last fight, which lasted 10 rounds when the Mexican's corner threw in the towel.

Morales, who beat Pacquiao by decision in their first battle, also claimed in a recent interview that it was because of him that Pacquiao became famous worldwide.

"*Ipakakain ko sa kanya ang mga salita niya* (I will make him eat his words)," said Pacquiao, who was conferred the Lakandula award as "champion for life" by President Macapagal Arroyo at the Malacañang Palace yesterday.

"*Pag*-start *pa lang ng* training *ko mapapanaginipan ko na siya* (Morales) (I'll be dreaming about him when I start training for our fight)," said Pacquiao.

Against Larios, Pacquiao said he found no need to go for a knockout because he was in full control of the fight.

He knocked down Larios twice and left no doubt of his mastery in their showdown for the WBC international superfeather weight title at the Araneta Coliseum.

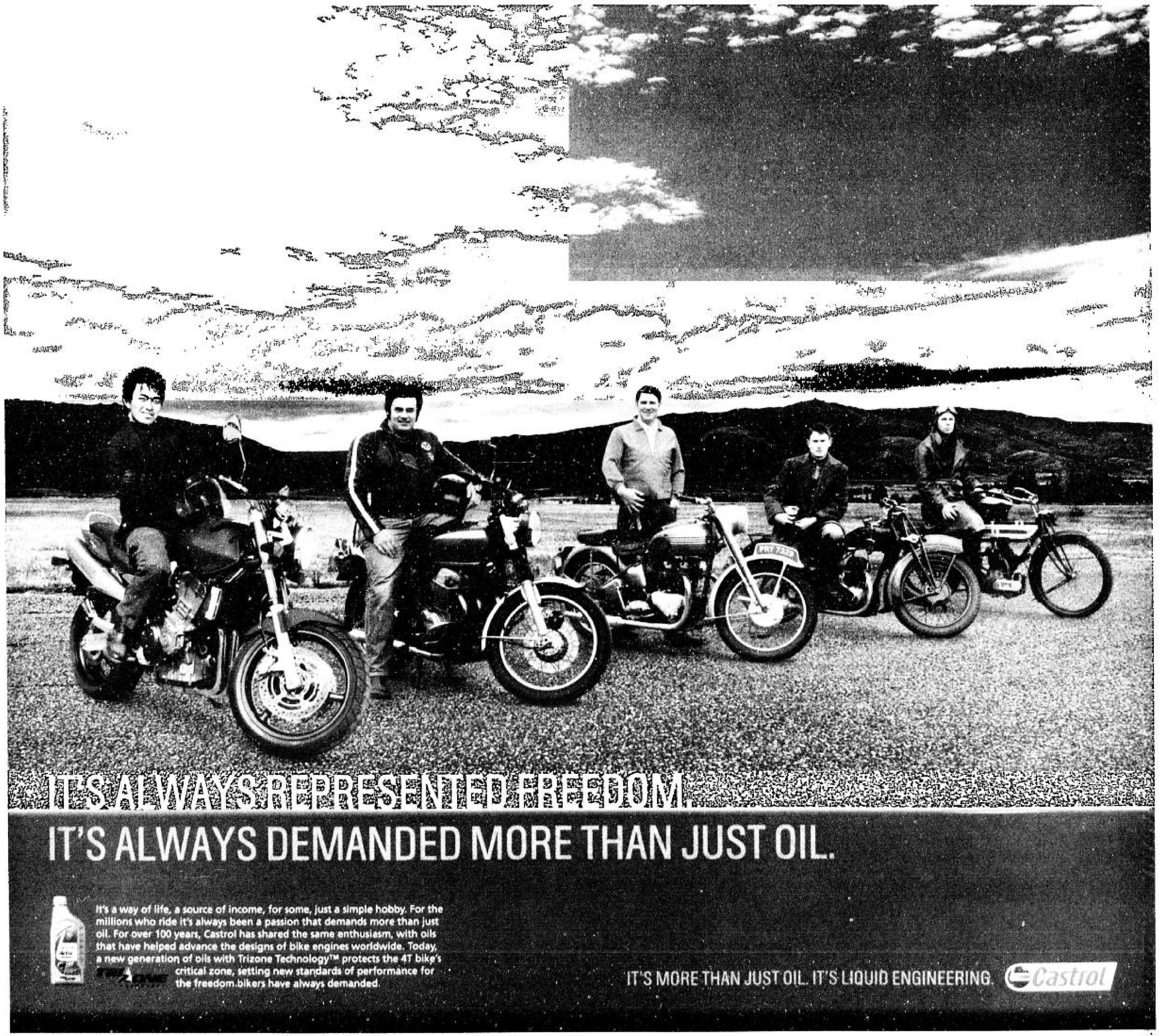
But Pacquiao is in for a serious build-up against Morales.

Trainer Freddie Roach, convinced that Pacquiao was nowhere in top form for the Larios bout, promised to make the training sessions "bloody" for his prized ward.

Roach also set a longer time frame for Pacquaio's training, indicating that the six-week Pacquiao had spent at the gym for Larios was

PACQUIAO/ A23

PRESIDENT Arroyo presents a tray of bread in the shape of boxing gloves to Manny Pacquiao during the fight icon's courtesy call at Malacañang Palace yesterday. Palace chefs baked the bread as a tribute to their hero. LYN RILLON



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Solid UAAP caging crown shot for UE Warriors

PUMAREN

By Jasmine W. Payo

BY NOW, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE East Warriors have become accustomed to the pre-season hype as the title favorites this season.

There's no question that the Warriors have the talent, depth and experience to win it all in the UAAP men's basketball tournament, which begins July 8.

And the anxiety of meeting all high expectations isn't lost on UE coach Dindo Pumaren.

"Compared to past seasons, the expectations on UE have never been higher and the players are aware of that," said the third-year mentor. "But we try not to be distracted. We know our team is competitive this year, but we still have to get past strong teams like Ateneo and FEU."

While Pumaren would like to tone down the early plaudits, the Warriors remain the experts' choice following their unbelievable run this summer.

In the last four months, UE bagged the championship crowns in the Home and Away League, the Micaba and the Fr. Martin's Cup—three tough pre-season tournaments that featured the top collegiate squads in the UAAP and the NCAA.

Leading the Warriors are returnees Bonbon Custodio, last season's top scorer at 11.5 points per game, forward Mark Borboran and wingman Marcy Arellano. Also boosting the Warriors' solid core are sophomore big men Elmer Espiritu and Jorel Cañizares, shooter James Martinez and senior point guard Robert Labagala.

"UE is not a one-man squad," said Pumaren. "But of course, the skills and leadership of Bonbon, Mark and Marcy will be crucial in this team."

Hans Thiele, a 6-foot-4 walk-in recruit from Aklan, is the best among the Warriors' talented bunch of rookies.

"They're thriving in our system," said Pumaren of his six freshmen. "Of course, they have to earn their minutes, but they're all working hard."

Pumaren added that the Warriors, who lost to champion Far Eastern University in the Final Four last season, will continue to hit the floor running.

"Our advantage will still be our speed, our quickness," said Pumaren. "But we have to be consistent. I've been telling my players that even if we sweep the pre-season tournaments, it doesn't stop there.

"They should continue to show the aggressiveness they displayed over the summer."

Knights charge past Stags, grab top spot

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LETRAN, WITH VETERAN BOYET BAUTISTA leading a balanced attack, outclassed San Sebastian, 81-73, yesterday and took solo top spot in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Bautista topscored with 16 points and added two rebounds, two assists and a steal as the defending champion Knights picked up their second straight win.

The 5-foot-8 point guard presided over the smooth transition game of Letran, which pulled away by as many as 17 points, 55-38, midway through the third quarter on two charities by the comebacking Aaron Aban.

After skipping the first game with a hurting left wrist, Aban rejoined the Knights to score nine points, including two free throws, after SSC coach Raymund Valenzona was slapped a technical for stepping onto the court to protest a call.

San Beda demolished host St. Benilde, 71-57, and moved up to second spot in a tie with idle PCU with a 2-1 record.

With coach Koy Banal deftly shuffling his talent-laden line-up, the Red Lions pulled away in the second quarter, leading by double figures the rest of the way through veteran Rogie Menor and rookies Samuel Ekwe and Pong Escobal.

Rookie John Raymundo and Jim Viray kept the Stags in the fight in the first half before the Knights pulled way in the third quarter.

"I was planning to rest him (Aban) for this game, but he said he is okay," said Letran coach Louie Alas of his prized mainstay, who played for Toyota Otis in the recent PBL series.

The defending champion SSC Staglets earlier routed the Letran Squires, 66-47, for their third straight victory.

The San Beda Red Cubs trounced La Salle Green Hills-CSB, 88-74, to post their second win in three games. The LSGH-CSB Greenies suffered their first loss after posting back-to-back wins.

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	2	0
PCU	2	1
SBC	2	1
Perpetual	1	1
Mapua	1	1
CSB	1	2
SSC	1	3
JRU	0	1

GAMES TOMORROW
(Ninoy Aquino Stadium)
12 noon—Letran vs JRU (Jrs/Srs)
4 p.m.—PCU vs Perpetual (Srs/Jrs)

The scores:

Second Game (Srs)

LETRAN 81—Bautista 16, Balneg 11, Jazul 10, Mondragon 9, Aban 9, Quinday 6, Faundo 6, Guevarra 5, Daa 5, Realista 2, Dangcal 2, Ranises 0.

SSC 73—Raymundo 12, Viray 10, Juan 9, Najorda 8, De Leon 8, Vicente 7, Bulawan 6, Ballesteros 6, Lindaya 3, Sagad 2, Aquino 2, Quiamco 0.

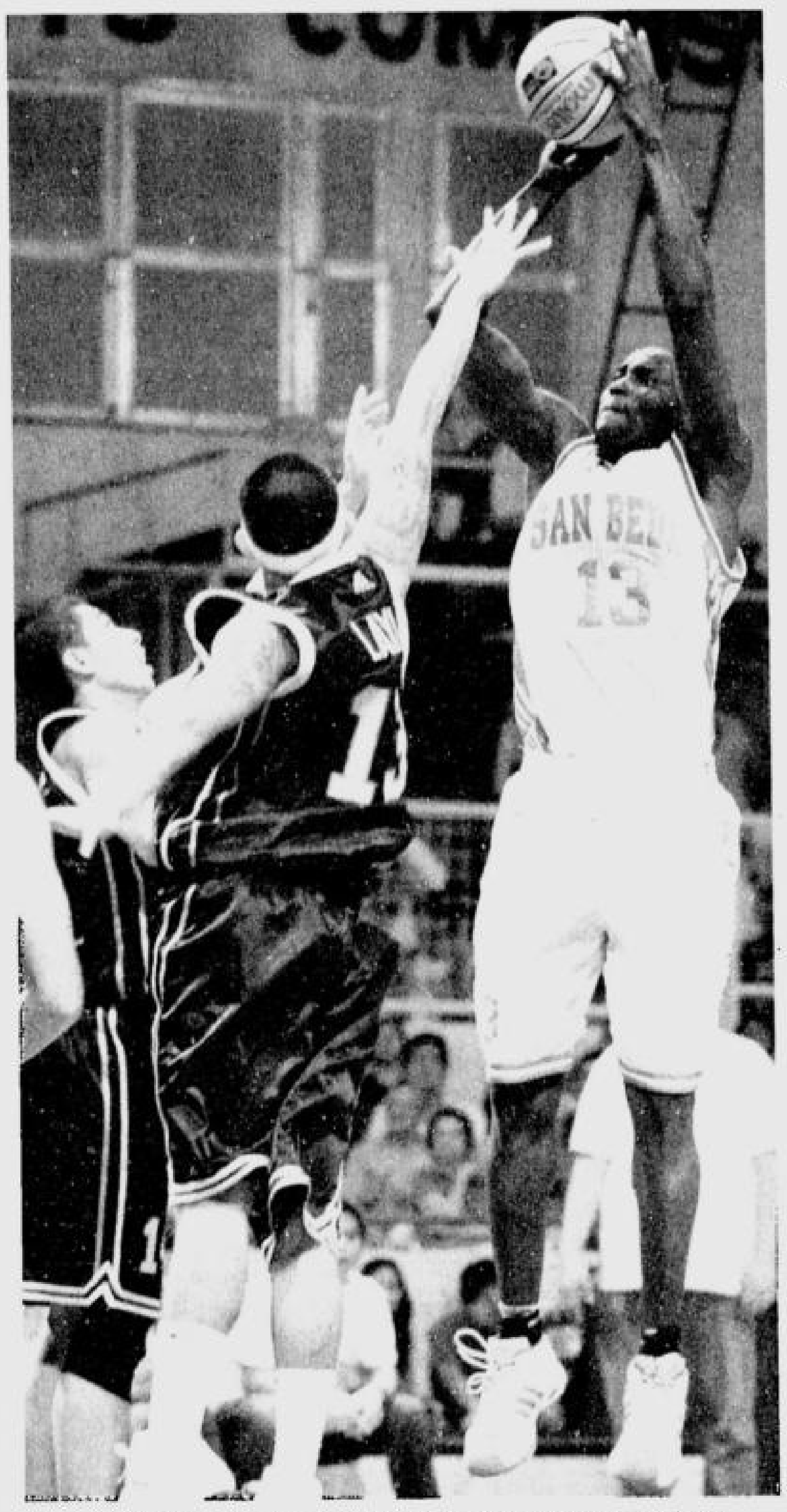
Quarters: 16-17, 44-40, 65-51, 81-73

Fourth Game (Srs)

SAN BEDA 71—Aljamal 13, Menor 12, Escobal 11, Maggay 10, Ekwe 8, Tecson 4, Hermida 4, Angeles 3, Gamalinda 2, Antonio 2, Taganas 2, Evangelista 0, Espinosa 0, Taupa 0.

ST. BENILDE 57—Urra Jr 29, David 8, Sevilla 5, Johnston 4, Layug 3, Manding 3, Robles 2, Trillo 2, Manlapaz 1, Aldover 0.

Quarters: 22-15, 26-43, 63-42, 71-57


SAN BEDA'S Nigerian tower Samuel Ekwe shoots off St. Benilde's Gerald Layug in yesterday's game at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. RYAN LIM

Air Force booters stay unscathed; Xavier falls

WORKING EXTRA HARD ON DEFENSE, AIR Force brushed past Kaya Football Club, 4-1, to clinch its fourth straight win, even as Xavier Alumni fell to the AFP Selection, 3-9, at the resumption of the 2006 Adidas Futsal Championship over the weekend at the FMAC Gym in La Salle Green Hills in San Juan.

La Salle trounced University of Asia & the Pacific, 8-1, in the lone women's encounter, while Army, Veterans and Union FC also posted wins to improve their marks in their respective divisions in the men's side of the tournament sponsored by Adidas in cooperation with the National Capital Region Football Association.

The Air Force booters remained on top of the heap in the men's First Division with a 4-0-0 (win-draw-loss) card as Emelio Caligdong, PAF's most prolific scorer, scored two of the team's four goals. Kaya, which came up with a lone goal from Ed Mallari, fell to 1-0-3.

Not to be outdone, the Armymen posted the day's lone shutout, a 10-0 rout of Superfriends.

Led by Nestorio Margarse and Wilson dela Cruz, Army held Superfriends frustrated throughout the match for its third win in as many games to stay in second spot behind Air Force.

Biggest upset

Also gaining ground in the men's First Division was Veterans FC, which outsteadied Navy, 7-5.

But the day's biggest upset belonged to the AFP Selection, which surprised the Xavier Alumni booters with a well-coordinated attack en route to its second win in three starts in the men's Second Division-A.

Edwin Cabalida sparked AFP's big win with two goals in the 6th and 7th minute in the first half and chipped in two more minutes later, while Romeo Buyco capped AFP's runaway victory with two more goals.

John Paul Tantiansu scored three times for Xavier Alumni, which took its first loss in four games.

In the La Salle-UA&P encounter, Fiona McKenzie sizzled with three goals, while her teammates had at least a goal each as the Lady Archers climbed into the solo lead with a 3-0-1 mark.

In the only other match in the men's Second Division-B, the Union Football Club buried El Magistrado under an avalanche of hits for a 17-4 win.

With the win, Union FC wrested the lead with a 3-0-0 slate with El Magistrado dropping to second spot with a 2-0-1 card.

Davao squads rule Adidas Streetball leg

DAVAO CITY—TEAMS FROM THE HOST CITY SWEPT their rivals from Cagayan de Oro to bag the boys' and girls' titles of the 2006 Adidas Mindanao Streetball Challenge qualifying tournament yesterday at the Gaisano Mall of Davao.

Jennifer Mayol, Cindy Canegas, Jaccil Rasonable and Diane Cangmaong of Assumption-Davao bannered Phexjaq to the girls' crown, while Team Mac—made up of RR Wong, Lloyd Lacida and Marjan Pinto—from Holy Cross of Davao topped the boys' division.

Canegas forged overtime then Mayol hit the winning charities as Pehxjaq nipped Climacool Slide for the title. Regulation play ended at 14-all.

Team Mac had an easier time posting a 13-7 win over Falcon, a team from Cagayan de Oro's Sacred Heart of Jesus Montessori, 13-7, for the boys' crown.

Phexjaq reached the final after tripping Ikwa, 8-6, while Climacool Slide edged Ateneo de Davao's Climacool Run, 9-7, in the other semifinal match.

The winning teams earned all-expense paid trips to Manila for the finals, apart from P20,000 in gift certificates.

The Philippines, bannered by a crack team from San Beda, won the Asian title last year.

Adidas executives John Alonte, Goody Custodio, Joel Orense and Odette Velarde and PSC commissioner Leon Montemayor, and city administrator Wendell Avesado were present during the opening ceremony of the event that drew 36 boys' and 12 girls' teams.

Vic Sai was the local organizer of the tournament, which was also supported by Viva and Central 911.

Suico has 'strong chance' in title crack

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

FILIPINO CHALLENGER RANDY Suico stands a good chance of unseating World Boxing Association lightweight king Juan Diaz when they meet on July 15 at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Golden Boy Promotions vice president Eric Gomez, who was in town for the Manny Pacquiao-Oscar Larios showdown Sunday, said Suico has what it takes to inflict a first-ever career loss on Diaz, adding the Filipino fighter is even capable of winning by knockout.

"I've seen Suico fight in the United States, and he hits so hard," said Gomez. "He stands a very good chance against Diaz."

Golden Boy Promotions, owned by the iconic Oscar De la Hoya, is promoting the July 15 card where the Suico-Diaz clash will serve as the chief support to the titanic rematch between Sugar Shane Mosley and Fernando Vargas.

Ranked No. 8 in the WBC and No. 10 in the WBA, Suico was tapped to replace original challenger Lakva Sim of Mongolia, who got injured while training.

Suico (24-2, 21 KOs) and trainer Juanito Ablaca left for Los Angeles last night.

Solar Sports will air the fight live on July 16.

Japan's Joe Koizumi, Suico's manager who was in Manila to watch the Pacquiao-Larios bout, said Suico had already sparred against top Japanese fighters, and should be ready on fight day.

SUICO: "He hits so hard."

It's on for last part of Pacquiao-Morales trilogy

COMMENTARY

By Hermie Rivera

HAILED BY OSCAR DE LA HOYA AS THE world's best in the super featherweight class, Manny Paquiao checked in at the Big Dome armed with his usual tools to make his fight look easy against Oscar Larios.

But the Mexican brawler greeted Pacman instead with a marvelously-timed left hook—capped by a series of hard rights that hushed the packed crowd that came in full force for Sunday's Thrilla at the Araneta II.

Given Manny's past stoppages of the elite in his weight class, say, Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales, the bold stand put up by Larios did mess up Team Pacquiao's game plans, which necessitated a shift in gears—offensively and to a greater extent—defensively.

And beating the Guadalajara brawler despite his shortened stint at his favored Wild Card gym in Hollywood was foremost in Manny's priorities.

Larios who is confronted by the daunting task of toppling an icon showed excellent moves. He dominated the third round with wicked shots which, for a while, seemed enough to stop Pacquiao dead on his tracks.

Close but no cigar as the oft-used cliche goes.

Manny's adroit defensive maneuvers forced Larios to miss badly at times (*wasiwas*), resulting in a wind draft that could have saddled Manny with an unwanted "cold."

When Pacman turned maddeningly ruthless in the final round with vicious headshots that floored the game Mexicano, the entire archipelago erupted in a roar for their hero's commendable performance, unseen in ages, we might add.

Combining terrific hand speed, relentless punching and a warrior's heart as reflected in Recah Trinidad's authoritative "Pacific Storm"—nothing but a brilliant future is ahead for our superstar. Not that he hasn't reached that much-coveted plateau yet.

So what's next for Marvelous Manny, a super featherweight who punches like a heavyweight?

Completion of his three-fight deal with Morales.

The concluding part of their trilogy is penciled for Nov. 18 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The latest sighting of Morales was at Mt. Otomi where he has started climbing his calvary in a desperate bid to make the weight.

Speaking of weight woes, one can't help recalling the ordeal Manny felt when he figured in a losing cause against Medgoen Battery, who scored an impressive kayo in Nakhon, Thailand, to claim his WBC flyweight title.

The culprit—Kid overweight. From 135 to 113 lbs in a month's time of arduous weight shedding.

Manny is now on a month-long rest before leaving to train at his digs' in sunny California.

Outstanding!

SPORTSWATCH

Baguio hosts Shell Active chess 2nd leg

THE BATTLE FOR BERTHS IN THE 2006 SHELL NATIONAL YOUTH ACTIVE Chess Championship grand finals resumes on July 8 and 9 with the staging of the second leg in Baguio City. Titles in the junior category for players 20 years old and below and in the kiddies class for those 14 and below are being disputed in the eight-leg series. The Baguio event serves as the first of the two Northern Luzon legs which will be held in cooperation with SM Supermalls and sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP). It will culminate in the grand finals in October with the champion in the juniors division receiving P30,000 and the kiddies winner getting P20,000. Leg winners in the junior and kiddies categories will pocket P5,000 and P4,000, respectively. For inquiries, call chief coordinator Alex Dinoy at 744-1664 or 0916-5146384 or local coordinator Briccio Domondon at 074 446-9103.

RP vying in Asian Road Race of Nations

THE NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE SPORTS AND SAFETY ASSOCIATION (Namssa) will represent the Philippines in the first Asian Road Race of Nations 2006 set July 6 and 7 in Thailand. A brainchild of the Motorcycle Federation of Japan, the event is an Olympic-style road race aimed at developing the first stage of teamwork competition in Asia. Each participating country will be represented by three riders but only the scores of the top two entries count. Eleven countries will be competing for the title. Aside from the Philippines and host Thailand, the other entries are Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia and Japan. Namssa has nominated Jaime Barcial, Roderick Chua and Malco Buncio to represent Team Philippines, said Namssa president Ken Falco. The RP squad will be supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, Namssa, Norkis Yamaha, Fastlane, Bike Plus, YRS, Revzone, OZ Racing, Motorcyclephilippines.com, XTech CDI, GV Accessories, Far Eastern Univenture and Nitro Shock Absorbers.

70-plus fights in Roligon 6-cocker today

MORE THAN 70 MATCHES ARE ON TAP TODAY IN THE "HATAWAN SA TAG-Ulan" 6-cock derby which unfolds today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit with Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone as sponsors. Today's 2-cock elimination round will start at 5 p.m. Fourteen participants have so far advanced to the championship round on July 11. Among the qualifiers with two points each were Toto Que's Alpha entry, Nelson Uy (Super Natural), Nino Hemo (Silver V), Bing Dodson (Dodson Farms), Ramon Saldana (Roxanne), Richard Ramos (Rated RR), Cesar Ramirez (Robson CFR Redemption), Wilson Chua (Wellman) and Jover Dilao (Jhezil Farms). Host Rolly Ligon said cockers and breeders may still join the event by fielding their entries on Thursday. For inquiries, call Shirley or Jonna at 851-2275, 833-1638 or 852-9812.

Big Four brace for semis push

BERLIN—THE WORLD CUP SEMIFINALISTS—GERMANY, Italy, France and Portugal—were gathering their forces on Monday and plotting their tactics for Tuesday and Wednesday's games in Dortmund and Munich.

German preparations for the last four game against Italy in Dortmund were thrown into turmoil with the news that midfield dynamo Torsten Frings was under investigation by Fifa for his part in the free-for-all that marred the conclusion to the quarterfinal win over Argentina.

Frings claims he was only defending himself in the fracas, but if Fifa takes the opposite view he could be suspended for the Italy game.

That would force a tactical rethink from coach Jurgen Klinsmann who already has skipper Michael Ballack struggling with injuries.

The Germans will remain at their Berlin base until Monday evening when they will head over to Dortmund, a football-mad city in western Germany, for Tuesday's game which is being billed as the biggest on home soil since the 1974 World Cup final.

The Italians will remain at their nearby Duisburg base with their final training session planned at the Borussia Dortmund ground on Monday evening.

Marcello Lippi will once more almost certainly have to do without injured central defender Alessandro Nesta, but his chosen replacement, Marco Materazzi, is available again after suspension.

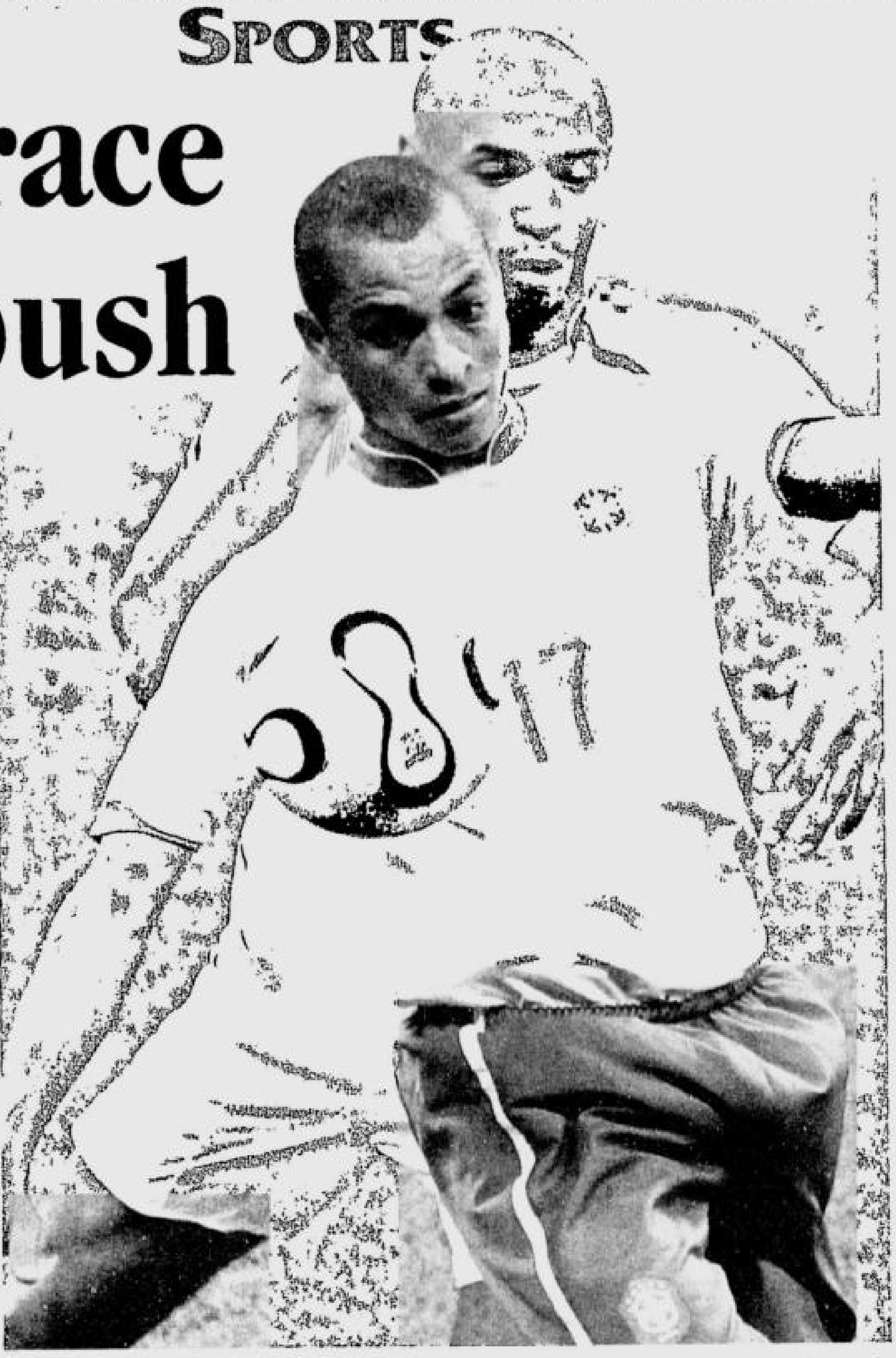
French coach Raymond Domenech, who has spent weeks trying to instill confidence in his flagging team, suddenly had the boot on the other foot as he tried to bring his players back down to earth after their stunning 1-0 win over Brazil in the quarterfinals.

The French go up against England's conquerors Portugal in Munich on Wednesday knowing that they have a strong winning record against them in major tournaments.

"We've already beaten Portugal but I'm not into statistics, that's history, this is 2006, the reality is on Wednesday night," Domenech warned from the French training base outside Hanover.

"The danger for us now is to think we've done it by beating Brazil, we've got to get the players back to where they were before that win." Domenech has the advantage of an almost injury-free squad, but he has six players on one yellow card. A further yellow against Portugal would rule any of them out of an eventual final in Berlin on July 9.

Portugal, based at nearby Marienfeld, has exceeded all expectations by reaching the last four, the only country without a previous World Cup win to do so. *AFP*



BRAZILIAN midfielder Gilberto Silva (front) disputes ball possession against French forward Thierry Henry in the World Cup Sunday. France ousted Brazil, 1-0. AFP

Manchester slams door on Ronaldo

RONALDO

LONDON—PORtuguese winger Cristiano Ronaldo, criticized for his role in Wayne Rooney's sending off at the World Cup, won't be back at Manchester United and can expect payback from the star England striker in the future, according to a report.

Quoting an unnamed source, The Sun newspaper reported Monday that Rooney threatened to "split him in two" when the two next meet.

Ronaldo may be wearing a different uniform when that happens. The British tabloid says United will show Ronaldo the door "because of his World Cup shame."

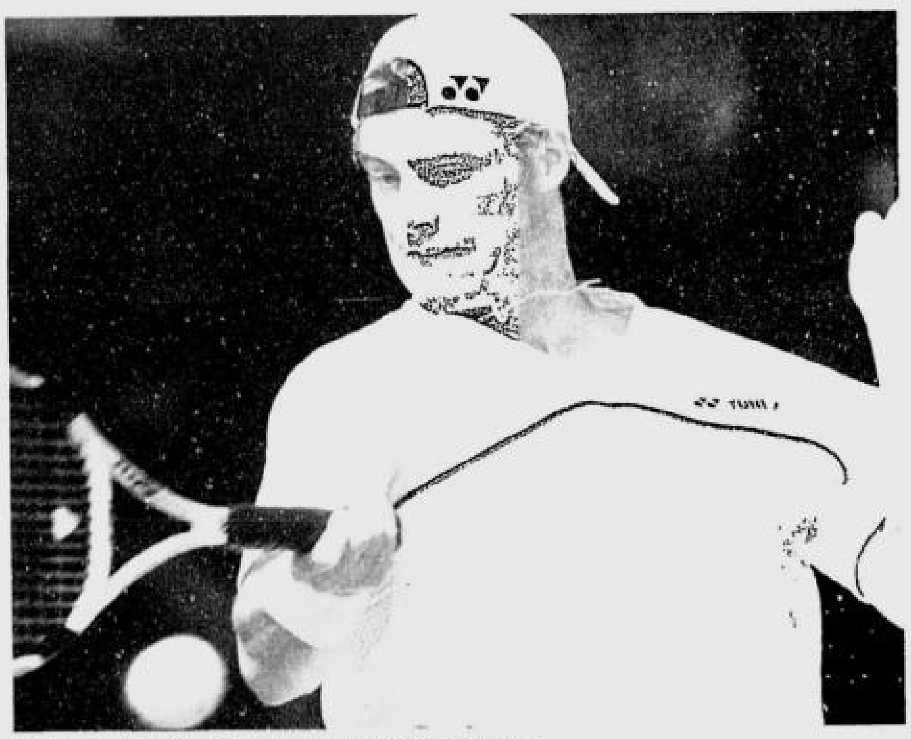
Ronaldo, who has spoken of moving to Real Madrid, infuriated England players for his actions in United teammate Rooney's ejection Saturday. After Rooney stamped on defender Ricardo Carvalho's groin, Ronaldo rushed to the Argentina referee to complain. When Rooney was shown the red card, moments after shoving Ronaldo, cameras caught Ronaldo winking—apparently at the Portugal bench.

Citing a top Football Association source, The Sun reported Rooney's rant came one day after the penalty shootout loss to Portugal in the World Cup quarterfinals. *AP*

Beckham out for six weeks

BERLIN—OUTGOING ENGLAND CAPTAIN DAVID Beckham will be sidelined for six weeks after sustaining knee and ankle injuries in the World Cup defeat by Portugal, the BBC reported on Sunday. Beckham was substituted early in the second half of the quarterfinal in Gelsenkirchen on Saturday, which England lost 3-1 in a penalty shootout. The BBC said scans showed a tear in his right Achilles tendon and a small "lesion" in the ligaments of his left knee. *Reuters*

Last American bows out of Wimbledon



LLEYTON Hewitt: Out to regain his 2002 crown.

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—FOR THE first time in nearly a century, no Americans will play in the quarterfinals of Wimbledon.

The last US player left in either the men's or women's draw—Shenay Perry—lost 6-2, 6-0 Monday in 54 minutes to seventh-seeded Elena Dementieva of Russia.

The 62nd-ranked Perry dropped 10 straight games from 2-2 in the first set to end the American challenge by lunchtime on the first day of the second week, a humiliating statistic for a nation which has won by far more Wimbledon singles titles—83— than any other.

The last time no Americans reached the quarterfinals at the All England Club was in 1911, when no US women and only three men were entered in the tournament.

None of the nine American men in the draw this year reached the fourth round, with 1992 champion Andre Agassi and two-time finalist Andy Roddick losing Saturday to Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray, respectively.

Fourteen US women were entered, with defending champion and three-time winner Venus Williams upset Saturday by Jelena Jankovic of Serbia.

Dementieva had 21 winners and 16 errors to reach the Wimbledon quarters for the first time. The eighth-ranked Russian, a former finalist at the French and US Opens, had lost in the fourth round here three times.

Also Monday, French qualifier Severine Bremond upset 18th-seeded Ai Sugiyama of Japan, 7-6 (11), 6-3. She's the first qualifier to get this far at Wimbledon since Jelena Dokic and Alexandra Stevenson in 1999. Sugiyama, a former quarterfinalist, was making her 14th straight stint at Wimbledon.

After the middle Sunday's traditional day of rest for everyone, Wimbledon's second week started with a unique treat in tennis, with all 16 men's and women's fourth-round matches on Monday's schedule. *AP*

SCHUMACHER: Mood to party. AFP

Schu rules Grand Prix

INDIANAPOLIS—FROM THE MOMENT HE pumped his fist in victory on the final straightaway, Michael Schumacher was in the mood to party.

The seven-time Formula One champion cut loose Sunday after winning the US Grand Prix for the fifth time and becoming the first driver in any series to win five races at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

The 37-year-old driver tossed his Brazilian teammate in the air, sprayed champagne and took a leap after stepping onto the victory podium. Then he waved his arms like a maestro as the crowd sang along with the German anthem, a grin plastered on his usually expressionless face.

"I've had very good times here," he said. "I feel very excited right now, and on the podium, I showed a lot of emotions. There are a lot of reasons that come into it, and it's something special."

In 2005, Schumacher accepted his accolades quietly, not even cracking a smile. After 14 of 22 cars were withdrawn moments before the race because of a safety issue, he was in no mood to celebrate after what he considered an embarrassing performance by F1.

He made up for it this year, proving he's the king of the US Grand Prix, no matter the size of the field. Schumacher won for the fourth straight time on the 2.6-mile (4.2-kilometer), 13-turn road course at the famed Brickyard.

The only other drivers to win as many as four at Indy are A.J. Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears—all in the Indianapolis 500—and Nascar's Jeff Gordon in the Allstate 400 at the Brickyard. *AP*

Francesca enters JVC semifinals

FRANCESCA BERMEJO OF POWERSMASH and 4Play's Diosan Abangan bested their respective rivals to arrange a semifinal showdown in the elite division of the P1 million JVC Open Badminton Championships at Glorietta yesterday.

Bermejo, the 16-year-old bet from Assumption, took the first set in convincing fashion but sputtered in the next before regaining her bearing, rhythm and form to stop Charo Rivera of Whackers Badminton Club, 21-15, 14-21, 21-11, and book a semis berth in the ladies side.

The victory set her up against Abangan, who fought back from a set down with a solid, steady game in the next two to carve out a 19-21, 21-14, 21-10 victory over Jacquiline Cudia of Hemady.

Rochanie Decatoria, who upended top seed Samantha Huang in the last 16, continued to flourish in the tournament sponsored by telecommunications giant JVC (Phils.) Inc. as she toppled Malvinne Alcala, 21-18, 21-8. She will dispute the first finals berth against Rina Batuigas of Iloilo, who bundled out Lisa Encarnacion of Golden Shuttle Foundation, 10-21, 21-17, 21-4, in the other quarterfinal match.

The semis round of the elite division, which stakes P12,000 plus gift items to the champion of each class and one of the eight categories lined up in the country's richest and biggest badminton tournament, will be played on Thursday starting at 11 a.m.

In men's play, Andrei Babad of JLTC/Battledore shocked fancied Kevin Dalisay of UST, 21-19, 20-22, 21-11, for the day's biggest upset as he reached the semis round against Ronald Daymiel of 4Play, who disposed of Raphael Sanches, 21-19, 21-10.

The other semis match pits Ronnel Estanislao against Antonino Gadi.

Sorenstam, Hurst return to play one more day

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND—ANnika Sorenstam had to wait 10 years to recapture the US Women's Open and thought it was in her hands when a 30-foot birdie putt broke gently toward the cup and started to dip into the hole on Sunday.

But it rippled over the edge, sending her into an 18-hole playoff against Pat Hurst on Monday.

Moments after Sorenstam's birdie putt narrowly missed, Hurst made a superb par save from short of the 18th green, holing a 5-foot putt that ended a marathon day at Newport Country Club with everything but a winner.

"The feelings that you get, it's indescribable," Hurst said of her par putt. "To have that chance to make that putt and make it to go into a playoff, it's something you dream about."

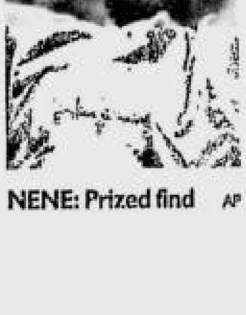
Sorenstam recovered from an ugly collapse with three birdies on the back nine to shoot even-par 71. Hurst, who leads the tournament with 16 birdies, had a 2-under 69 to match the best score of the tournament.

PAT Hurst (left) and Annika Sorenstam hug on the 18th green after finishing in a tie in the final round of the US Women's Open. REUTERS

"I kept telling myself, 'It's a long way to go, just be patient,'" Sorenstam said.

They finished at even-par 284, and after the first 36-hole Sunday at the US Women's Open in 16 years, they headed home for one more round to decide who wins the biggest prize in women's golf. *AP*

Nene stays a Nugget for $60M



NENE: Prized find AP

DENVER—POWER FORWARD Nene agreed to a six-year, $60 million deal to stay with the Denver Nuggets on Sunday, a day after getting married in Rio de Janeiro.

Combined with the five-year, $80 million extension that Carmelo Anthony agreed to on Saturday, Nuggets owner Stan Kroenke spent the first weekend of free agency committing about $140 million toward building what he hopes will be a NBA championship contender.

Nene, who has career averages of 10.7 points and 6.2 rebounds, played just three minutes last season before blowing out his right knee on opening night.

The restricted free agent was one of the most prized players on the market because of his youth —he's only 23—and rare mix of brawn and athleticism for a man who packs 260 lbs. *AP*

Pacquiao 'a tiger' in 3rd fight with Erik Morales

From page A21

simply inadequate.

According to Rafael Mendoza, Larios' agent and adviser, Morales will have a hard time making the 130-lb limit for the Nov. 18 third encounter.

But Shelly Finkel, Pacquiao's business manager, said they are willing to honor the rematch clause against Morales.

However, it will be up to Pacquiao if he's willing to fight Morales at a catch-up weight.

And, if it does happen, the Morales camp will have to pay Pacquiao for the extra poundage.

For Pacquiao, however, the weight doesn't really matter.

It is Morales' neck, he's after

RP climbers conquer N. America's highest peak

ALASKA—FOUR MEMBERS OF THE FIRST Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition team reached the peak of the 20,320-foot Mt. McKinley in Denali National Park in Alaska last June 23, reports to the team headquarters in Manila said yesterday.

Team leader Regie Pablo, with Noelle Wenceslao, Carina Dayondon and Larry Honoridez, conquered Mt. McKinley with no porters or guides to assist them during the trek.

The team left for Alaska last May 19.

"It was a tough climb and we had bad weather all the way, even on the way down," Pablo told Mt. Everest expedition leader Art Valdez in a recent phone call.

"All the expeditions we met supported us by supplying us with food and fuel as our supply was only good for 18 days. We stayed in the mountain for 34 days, which many say is very remarkable."

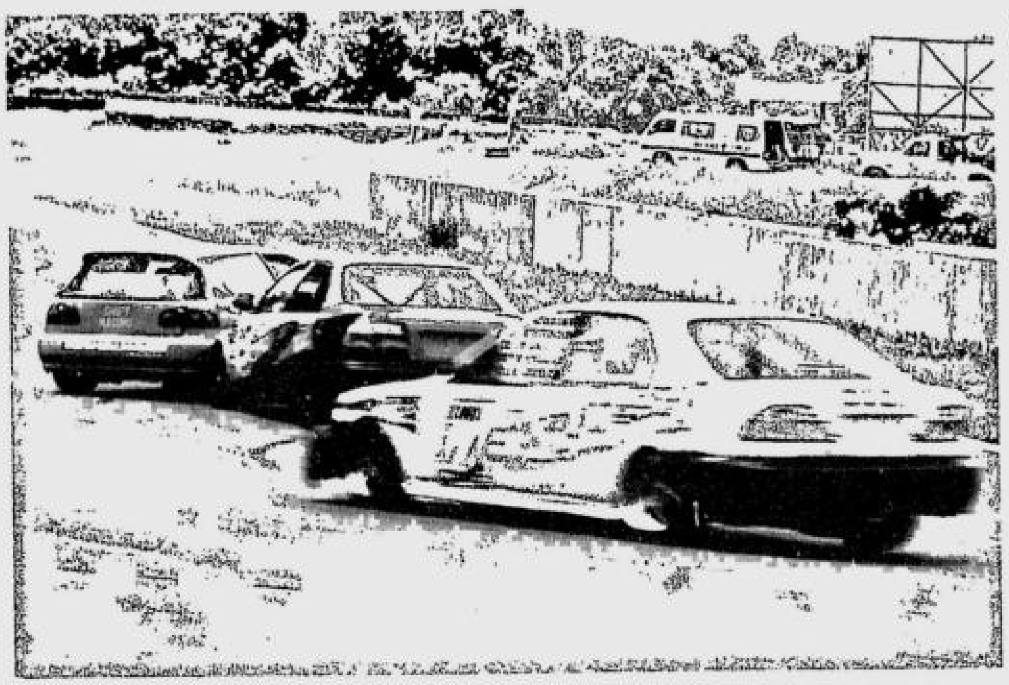
With temperatures of as low as minus 65 degrees Fahrenheit, Mt. Mckinley is one of the world's coldest mountains, even colder than Mt. Everest. It is the highest peak in North America, and one of the world's seven highest summits.

The FPMEE team is sponsored by Philippine Airlines, Summit Mineral Water, Stratworks, ABS CBN, Coleman, Kodak, PAMI, MedCentral, Fitness First, Power Up, Rudy Project, Mozcom and National Sports Grill.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Lady Be Gold (3), Valentine Girl (1), Heart of the Wind (6), Korek Ka Dyan (5)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Jacklyn Star (2), Dark Desert (4), Rhyme and a Prayer (1), Opening Statement (3)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Nico's Incharge (5), Long Hitter (9), Mika's Pride (2), Astimegoesby (3), Little Sam/Mischievous (4)
Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Latin Music (7), Iron Will (8), Chabacana (9), Brittney's Magic (10), Don Ramon (6), Fernan Ikaw Pa Rin (4)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Run Like D'Wind/Angie Gray (4), Dow Jones (2), Guardian (9), Pyramid Relaunch (3) Luck of the Irish (6)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Friendly Fire (4), House of Riches (2), Sugar Ray (1), Besame Mucho (3)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Romanticist (6), Looney Tune (8), Maragul (7), Ideal Gaze (3), Pabilic Express (5)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Smiling Jaeda (13), Nitty Gritty (12), Tervalac (6), Divien Diva (4), Wine and Roses (8), Ocean Cookie (7)



COLLISION: Buddy Rutledge loses control of his Honda Civic EG6 hatchback (left) and swerves in front of Miguel Lazaro's Honda Civic LXi during Sunday's 2006 San Mig Coffee-Petron Blaze Cup Philippine Touring Car Championships race at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas. Uly Maningding, in another Honda Civic LXi (right), avoids the collision just in time. Jody Coseteng topped the 12-lap race in 20 minutes and 56.641 seconds to widen his lead in the series sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines.

Carapiet clobbers Rotax race rivals

PHILIPPINE FORMULA TOYOTA champion Ivan Carapiet proved his mettle against the country's best karters by ruling the second round of the 2006 Rotax Invitational Challenge last Saturday at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Cavite.

Carapiet, 20, struggled during the time trials but topped the first qualifying heat and pre-final before ruling the 20-lap final.

He bagged the top purse of P42,500 and emerged as leader of the series sponsored by ING Banking, Pitts, Petron, Chicago City Day School, Ford Global City, Nissan Gallery and Klassik BMW.

Daniel Cleak secured second place worth P15,000, unable to really threaten Carapiet for much of the race.

Third place went to 10-year-old Alessandra Madrigal, who started the final race in seventh place but bravely worked her way up the field. She won P12,000.

Engine trouble hounded first-round winner Marlon Stockinger who settled for fourth place this time.

Stefano Marcelo came in fifth despite setting the fastest lap of 44.657 seconds.

VJ Suba proved too hot to handle in the Cadet 85 category as he posted his second straight win.

Renz Pascoguin and Eugene Okuda figured in a heated battle for second place in the last five laps of their 15-lap duel but it was Okuda who eventually prevailed—but by just a nose.

The top three Cadet 85 finishers took home cash prizes of P8,000, P5,000 and P3,000, respectively.

The next round will be held July 16, also at the Carmona Circuit.

Peña confident of more success in AF3 series

PEÑA: Could be faster

WHILE OVERALL LEADER TYSON SY WAITS FOR THE MECHANICS TO REbuild his damaged Dallara 304, fellow Filipino racing star Dado Peña is confident he can build on his breakthrough victory in last month's Round Four of the Asian Formula Three Series.

Peña, who will turn 19 on Saturday, is eagerly looking forward to the next round of the country-hopping race on July 15-16 at the Zhuhai International Circuit in Guangdong province.

"We've finally shown that we can be fast to win," said Peña, the lead driver of Team Goddard who is tied for third with 52 points along with series newcomer Ali Jackson of Ireland's Aran Racing.

"We've put the pieces together and we're going into the next round confident we could be faster."

Speedtech Asia's Sy, who figured in a harrowing crash in Round Five, also in Zhuhai, leads the race for the driver's championship with 87 points, followed by Briton Dillon Battistini of JA Motorsport at 56.

Four races make up the next leg in Zhuhai, including Round Six that was called off by officials of the supervising Hong Kong Automobile Association on account of the heavy rains that flooded portions of the 4.3-kilometer track.

Peña, who was running fourth in Round Five, saw Sy crash into the stalled car of Speedtech Asia's Gaby dela Merced in front of the grandstand. He immediately slammed the brakes to avoid flying debris.

"These things happen," he said, recalling that he was also involved in a crash, although of a lesser magnitude, last year at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

"But it's rather scary when you crash at 170-kilometers per hour."

Sy walked away from that sickening crash suffering from a whiplash, although his car will have to be rebuilt at a cost of nearly a million pesos.

As of last week, Speedtech Asia officials were still waiting for the delivery of various parts for Sy's car.

Peña's father, Ed, chair of the AF3, was ecstatic over his son's breakthrough win.

"It would not be the last," he said. "It's long overdue. The win showed Dado is really capable of going all the way."

Dimakiling captures Ozamiz chess crown

NEWLY INSTALLED INTERNATIONal Master Oliver Dimakiling beat fellow IM Richard Bitoon in the eighth round and then drew with NM Mirabeau Maga in the ninth and final round yesterday to rule the 1st Ozamiz City chess tournament at the Rep. Hilarion Ramiro Jr. City Gymnasium in Ozamis City.

The 26-year-old Dimakiling halved the point with Maga in just 12 moves of a Scotch Game to tally 8.5 points and secure the P30,000 champion's purse.

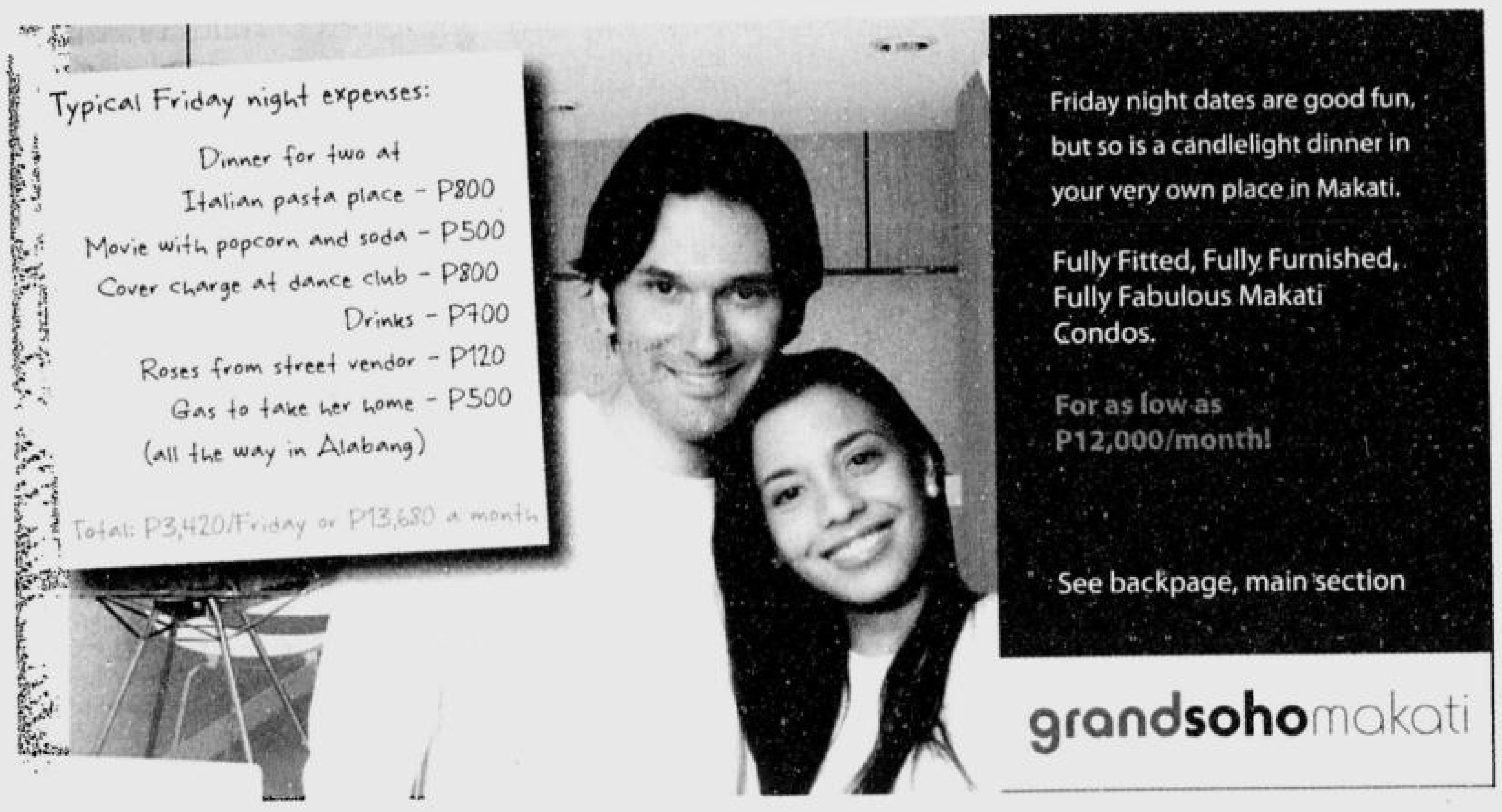
Dimakiling, who hails from Davao City, moved beyond reach of IM Barlo Nadera, who was still playing National Master Levi Mercado of Cagayan de Oro at press time.

Even if Nadera beats Mercado, he will only tally 8.0 points.

"I really gained a lot of experience from my stints in the Chess Olympiad and the San Marino Open," said Dimakiling, who also topped last month's Olympic Festival chess tournament.

Dimakiling was actually assured of the title after the eighth round as he had beaten Nadera in the sixth round. Tournament rules state that in case of a tie, the winner-over-the-other tiebreaker will apply.

Nadera handed Grandmaster Mark Paragua his second loss in the eighth round. Paragua, however, bounced back by beating Richard Natividad and finishing with 6.5 points. Bitoon was at 6.5 points with of NM Emmanuel Senador, NM Mirabeau Maga and Mercado. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*



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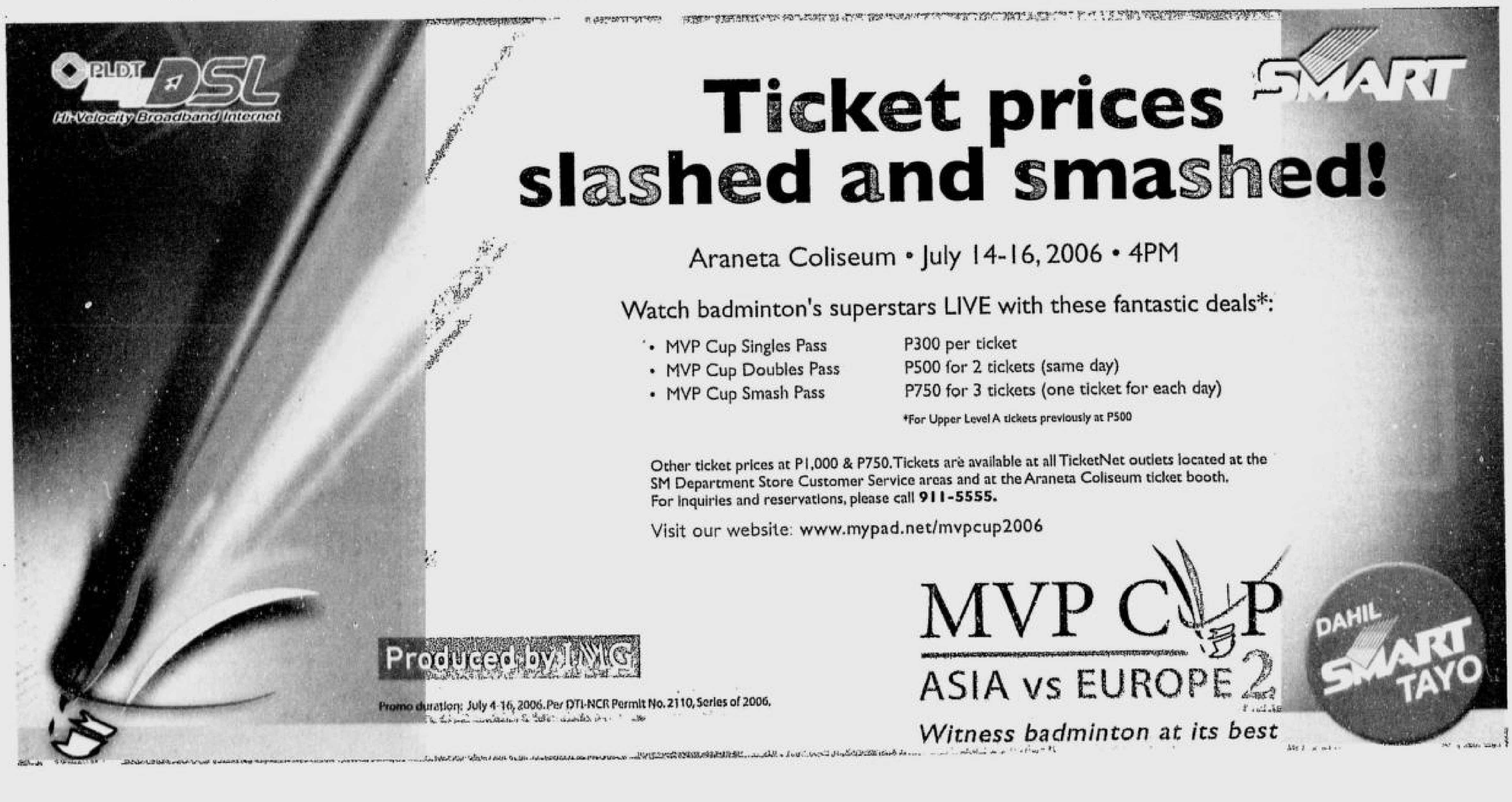

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Catching the 'Bench Fever' willingly, happily

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

AS A TRUE CHILD OF THE '70S, I immensely enjoyed the "Bench Fever '06" underwear and denim show at the Big Dome on Friday. The sounds and sights made me feel like Austin Powers was going to pop up anytime. The stage looked like a huge psychedelic transistor radio. There was even a hippie DJ spinning records inside a golden cage.

The new Bench undies are flirty and sporty. But it also has classic white and elegant black designs. They look too good to be worn under clothes.

KRISTINE Hermosa and Diether Ocampo as Bench models AFP

As in previous Bench shows, it wasn't only these that the audience had come to see, but also the celebs who did the catwalk. Some standouts were **John Estrada, Keanna Reeves, Wendell Ramos, Ruffa Mae Quinto, Jay-R** and **Richard Gutierrez**, not to mention the King and Queen of Bench—**Richard** and **Lucy Gomez**.

It was a visually delightful mixture of *Kapuso* and *Kapamilya* stars.

Ai-Ai de las Alas brought the house down, playfully touched the crotch of some male models.

Most enthusiastically applauded were **Richard Gutierrez, Jay-R, Sam Milby, Christian Bautista**, and PBB teen winners **Gerald Anderson** and **Kim Sue Chui**.

Joey Marquez and his ex-**Alicia Mayer** seemed to ignore each other on stage. He only had eyes for his daughter Winwin who also modeled some numbers.

The grand finale was the appearance of '70s idols Sister Sledge and Village People who sang anthems of the funky decade. It was anticlimactic, though. But all in all, it was one groovy evening. Everyone went home as "carriers" of the contagious fever.

Postscript

AT THE party after the fab show, John Estrada was seen kissing a Caucasian girl. He seemed to be a kissing bandit that night; onstage, he had gamely kissed Keanna Reeves, who was obviously thrilled.

Ghost with the most

AWARD-WINNING actress **Angelica Panganiban** plays the vengeful ghost in Regal Films' "White Lady." Angelica had to endure makeup that took two hours to apply every day, so

CATCHING/ A2-2

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(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 CARS
2 PACQUIAO

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687 6963 or 72
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 SCARY MOVIE - 4
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 LAKE HOUSE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 LAKE HOUSE
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SCARY MOVIE - 4

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 PACQUIAO
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 THE INSIDE MAN
2 PACQUIAO
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS / LAKE HOUSE
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 THE OMEN 666
2 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 MASAKIT WAG MONG IPILIT
3 THE DESCENT
4 WHORE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545 7202
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 TUMITIBOK KUMIKIROT
3 PACQUIAO
4 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
5 THE LAKE HOUSE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 INSIDE MAN
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SCARY MOVIE - 4
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BAYARAN
2 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO

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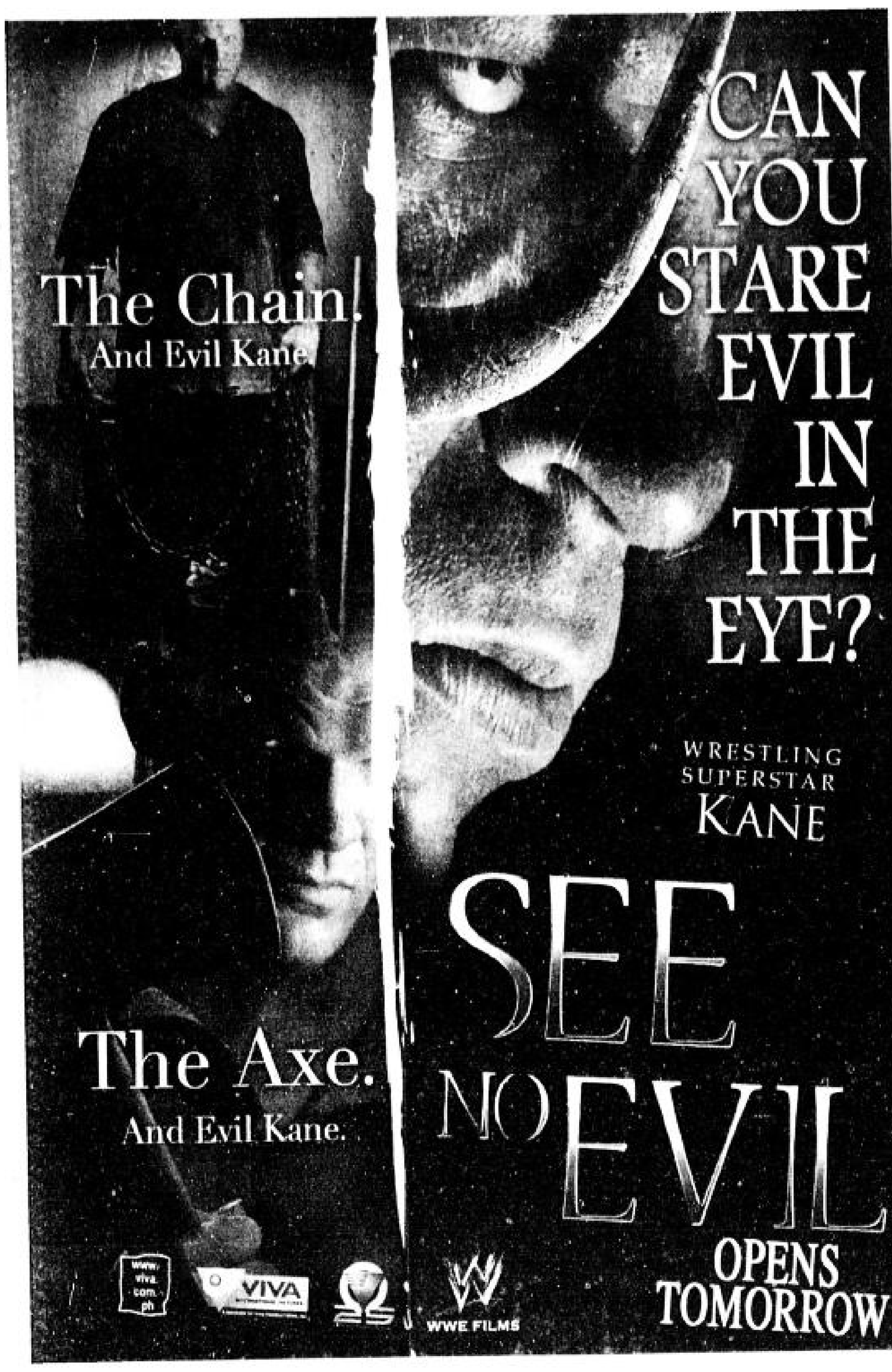
The Chain.
And Evil Kane.
The Axe.
And Evil Kane.
CAN YOU STARE EVIL IN THE EYE?
WRESTLING SUPERSTAR KANE
SEE NO EVIL
OPENS TOMORROW
VIVA
WWE FILMS

Catching the 'Bench Fever' . . .

From page A2-1

she could look like her face was decomposing. But she says she didn't mind.

"Direk [Jeff Tan] told me I shouldn't just be scary; I also have to gain the audience's sympathy."

And if Angelica were a real ghost, which the three guys she would haunt? "**Johnny Depp**, my long-time crush, **Piolo Pascual** because I wanna see how he looks when he's asleep, and **Rafael Rosell** whom I find sexiest."

Sexbomb no bums

THE SEXBOMB Dancers have really bounced back after "Eat Bulaga." They didn't turn into bums just because they lost their daily stint on the GMA 7 noontime show. But there's no truth to the rumor that they are moving to ABS-CBN.

Their soap "Daisy Siete" (3:15 p.m., weekdays on GMA 7) is on its 12th season.

I kidded their manager **Joy Cancio**, "Aren't you feeling vindictive towards anybody who gave the girls a bad deal?" She laughed, "Closed chapter *na 'yun!*"

A funny coincidence: the cookies they gave away at the launch of their show had "No Sugar Added" printed on the box! A subtle reminder that ex-Sexbomb girl Sugar is really out of their lives after going out of her mind, biting the hand that fed her?

Sarahhh!

SARAH Geronimo's smile lights up a room. And she has evmore reasons to smile these days because her telenovela, "Bituing Walang Ningning," is now one of the top draws among ABS-CBN's Primetime Bida programs. She is slated to go on a US tour in August and will

CATCHING/ A2-3

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DOLBY DIGITAL-EX
THE LAKE HOUSE 1:20 / 3:30 / 5:40 / 7:50 / 10:00
SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:30 / 12:05 / 12:30 / 12:50 / 1:10 / 2:00 / 2:40 / 3:15 / 3:40 / 4:00 / 4:20 / 5:10 / 5:50 / 6:25 / 6:50 / 7:10 / 7:30 / 8:20 / 9:00 / 9:35 / 10:00 / 10:20
Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:40 / 2:50 / 6:00 / 9:10
Ali MALL 5
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:15 / 3:10 / 6:05 / 9:00
4 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO 12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:00 R2 / 2:35 / 5:30 / 8:25
5 THE NUN 12:10 / 1:55 / 3:40 / 5:25 / 7:10 / 8:55
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:05 R4 / 2:00 / 4:55 / 7:50
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
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Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777
THX
G1 GLORIETTA 1: 1 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 3 SCARY MOVIE 4 · 4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
G4 GLORIETTA 4: 1 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 3 THX SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:45, 4:00, 7:15, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
4 THE LAKE HOUSE · 5 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT · 6 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
GB1 GREENBELT 1: 1 KINSEY · 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
GB3 GREENBELT 3: 1 THX SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:55, 4:10, 7:25, 10:40 GUARANTEED SEATS · 2 THX SUPERMAN RETURNS 1:35, 4:50, 8:05, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:00, 2:15, 5:30, 8:45, 12:00 GUARANTEED SEATS · 4 SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:36, 2:50, 6:05, 9:20 GUARANTEED SEATS · 5 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:15, 3:30, 6:45, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER: 1 THX SUPERMAN RETURNS · 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 4 THE LAKE HOUSE · 5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU: 1 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 3 THE LAKE HOUSE · 4 SCARY MOVIE 4
M2 MARKET! MARKET!: 1 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 2 SCARY MOVIE 4
3 THE LAKE HOUSE · 4 SUPERMAN RETURNS · 5 SUPERMAN RETURNS

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Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
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ALABANG TOWN CENTER: Gary V Live in concert! July 1, 2006
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MARKET! MARKET!: Sony Summer Pleasures 2006 June 19 to July 12, 2006
GREENBELT: Ode To The Pasig River June 27 to August 27, 2006
Onstage: JED MADELA in concert July 14 & 15 - 8PM For inquiries, pls. call Ticketworld - 8915610 or 7504180
Ayala MUSEUM: Ode To The Pasig River June 27 to August 27, 2006 For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

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Metropoint Mall 2/F Activity Center June 25, Sunday, 4pm
Pavilion Mall Bridgeway Activity Center July 10, Sunday, 4pm
PAVILION mall

MAUREEN Larrazabal AFP

Catching the 'Bench…

From page A2-2

soon release a new album under Viva Records.

She is also excited about her coming 18th birthday on July 25. Isn't 18 the right age for her to have a boyfriend already? She blushed and said, "My mom says *pwede na ko paligaw* but *wala pa namang nagkakamali.*"

But she sings those love songs with so much feeling. What more when she finally falls in love?

Daring Darling

SOMETIMES the best things are the things we don't plan. Like one rainy evening, when I got stranded in Padi's Point Timog, just waiting for the rain to stop.

It turned out to be one of the most fun nights I ever had.

Darling Lavinia heated things up with sexy song numbers and invited the men in the audience to join her on stage for a round of "body shots." There was also a wet shirt and T-back contest, plus ledge dancing. It was more than enough to chase the rainy night blues away.

Maybe, GAY be NOT

"LOVE to Love Season 11," which premiered last Sunday (after "SOP Gigsters" on GMA 7), brings back the stars of its two highest-rating seasons with the episodes "Fat is Fabulous" and "Best Friends" back-to-back. The first episode, directed by **Mark Reyes** and starring **Isabel Oli** and **Paolo Contis**, tells of an obese student who suddenly becomes sexy.

The second episode directed by **Khryss Adalia** is about the relationship of a gay man (**Paolo Ballesteros**) and a lesbian (**Ciara Sotto**).

I asked Paolo if he wasn't wary that portraying a *bading* would all the more fuel rumors that he's gay. He laughed. "They no longer bother me."

So why doesn't he make things official between him and Ciara to finally end those rumors?

"Just because I don't have a girlfriend doesn't mean I'm gay," he said. "I know of some guys who have many girls but it's only a cover-up."

Oh yeah! They'd better speak up or squeak up!

(*E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.*)

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What is Superman's birth name?	A. Daily Planet
What gives Superman his powers?	P. The Sun
What can take away Superman's powers?	S. Krypton
What material blocks Superman's x-ray vision?	E. Green Kryptonite
What is the name of Superman's secret identity?	R. Lead
Where does Clark Kent work?	U. Kal-El
Who is Superman's love interest?	N. Lois Lane

How to join? E-mail you answers together with your name, address, age and contact number to movieaddicts_smcinema@yahoo.com or send this page together with your particulars at your nearest SM Cinema branch. All answers must be correct in order to qualify. Multiple entries received will only be counted as a single entry. Deadline for submission of entries in on July 12, 2006.

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SUPERMAN RETURNS
SCARY MOVIE 4
THE NUN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
SUPERMAN RETURNS
CINEMA 2
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM NORTH EDSA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
THE NUN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SCARY MOVIE 4
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM CITY BICUTAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM MEGACINEMA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SCARY MOVIE 4
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SUPERMAN RETURNS
LAKE HOUSE
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
THE NUN
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
THE NUN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
SCARY MOVIE 4
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
LAKE HOUSE
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SCARY MOVIE 4
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PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
THE NUN
XMEN III

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SUPERMAN RETURNS
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FAST AND FURIOUS 3
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THE NUN
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO

SM CITY MANILA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
THE NUN
LAKE HOUSE
SCARY MOVIE 4
AMERICAN HAUNTING
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO

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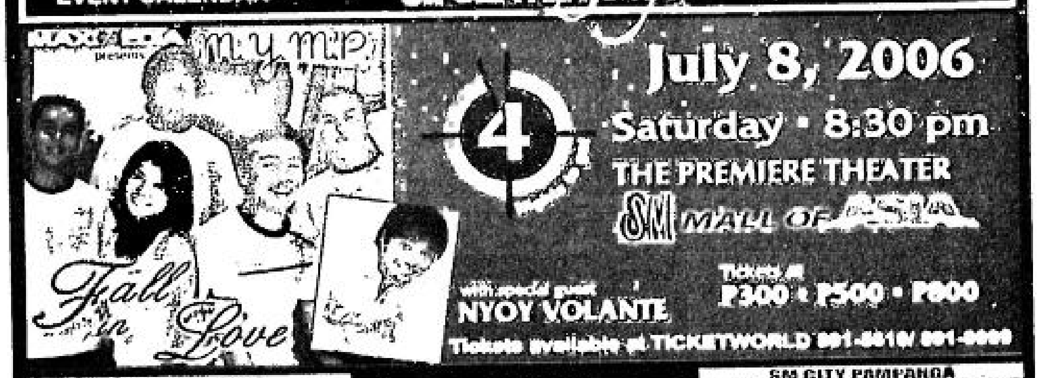
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
LAKE HOUSE
SCARY MOVIE 4
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SCARY MOVIE 4

SM CITY SUCAT
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
THE NUN

EVENT CALENDAR — SM CENTER Stage — EVENT CALENDAR



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SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM CITY BACOOR
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SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
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SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
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LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
THE OMEN
SCARY MOVIE 4

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INSIDE MAN
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

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FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SCARY MOVIE 4
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS

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SUPERMAN RETURNS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS

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SUPERMAN RETURNS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
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KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS

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SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SCARY MOVIE 4
LAKE HOUSE
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SUPERMAN RETURN
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SCARY MOVIE 4
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SUPERMAN RETURN

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SCARY MOVIE 4
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SUPERMAN RETURN
SUPERMAN RETURN

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SUPERMAN RETURN
SUPERMAN RETURN
THE OMEN
SUPERMAN RETURN

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS • THX 1:00 4:10 7:20 10:30
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS 3:40 6:50 10:00
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 1:40 4:50 8:00
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:00 2:10 5:20 8:30
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:00 3:10 6:20 9:30
6 THE NUN 12:00 2:10 4:20
7 LAKE HOUSE 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
8 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
9 SUPERMAN RETURNS 2:40 5:50 9:00
10 SCARY MOVIE 4 1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

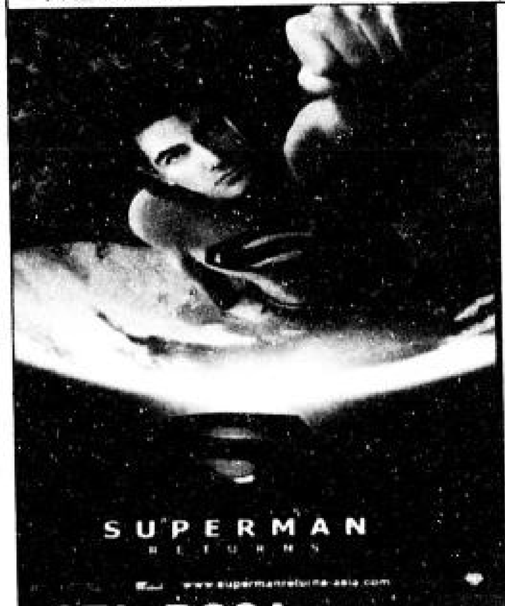
ERMITA 536-7800 to 12
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:30 3:45 7:00 10:10
2 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING 12:00 1:40 3:20 5:00 6:40 8:20 10:00
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 10:30 1:45 5:00 8:15
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:30 2:45 6:00 9:15
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:30 2:45 6:00 9:15
6 SCARY MOVIE 4 11:30 1:15 3:00
THE NUN 5:10 7:30 9:50
7 LAKE HOUSE 11:20 1:10 3:00
THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3 5:30 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199
1 SCARY MOVIE 4 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS 10:30 2:00 5:30 9:00
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 2:00 5:30 9:00
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS 1:00 4:30 8:00
5 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
6 THE NUN 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS 1:30 5:00 8:30
8 LAKE HOUSE 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 THE NUN
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 SCARY MOVIE 4

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 LAKE HOUSE / SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SCARY MOVIE 4



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2 LAKE HOUSE
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3 SUBMERGED
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

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1 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-6270
1 CHAOS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
4 SCARY MOVIE 4
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
6 SUPERMAN RETURNS

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 THE INSIDE MAN
5 SCARY MOVIE 4
6 THE OMEN

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4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 CARS
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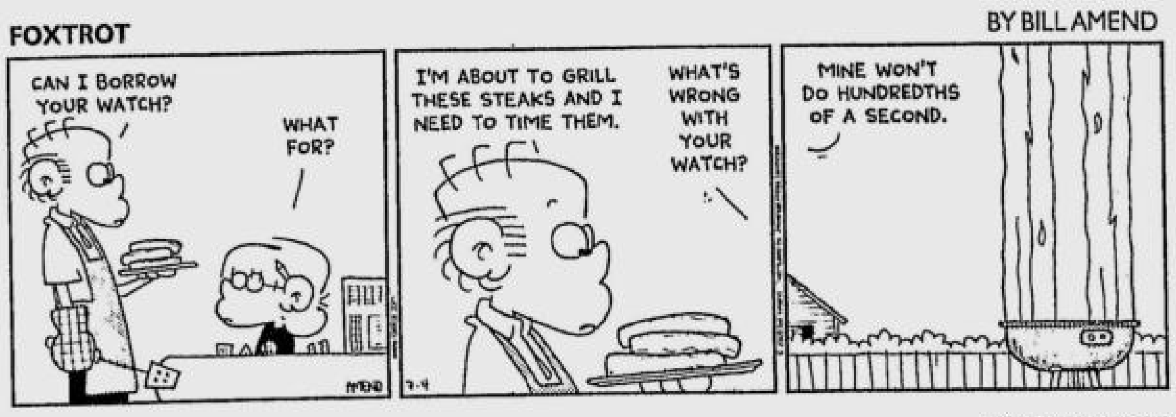
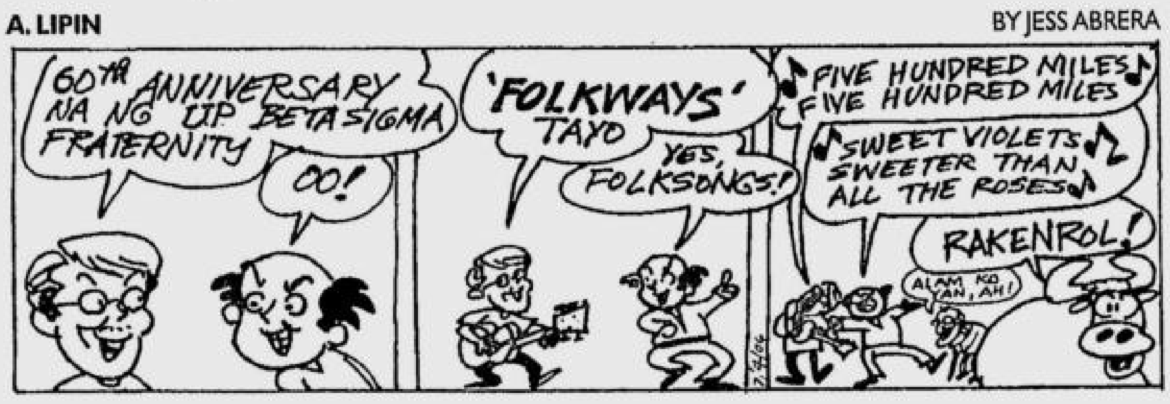
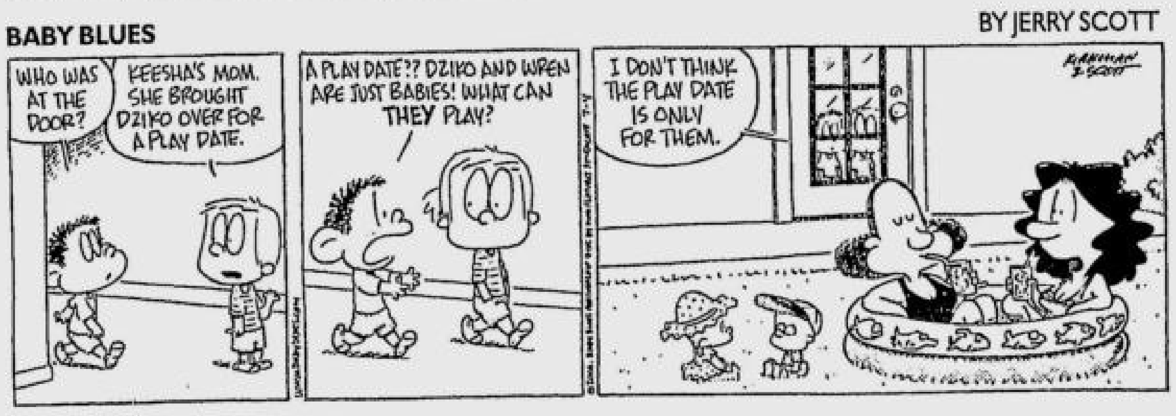

CAN I BORROW YOUR WATCH?
WHAT FOR?
I'M ABOUT TO GRILL THESE STEAKS AND I NEED TO TIME THEM.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR WATCH?
MINE WON'T DO HUNDREDTHS OF A SECOND.

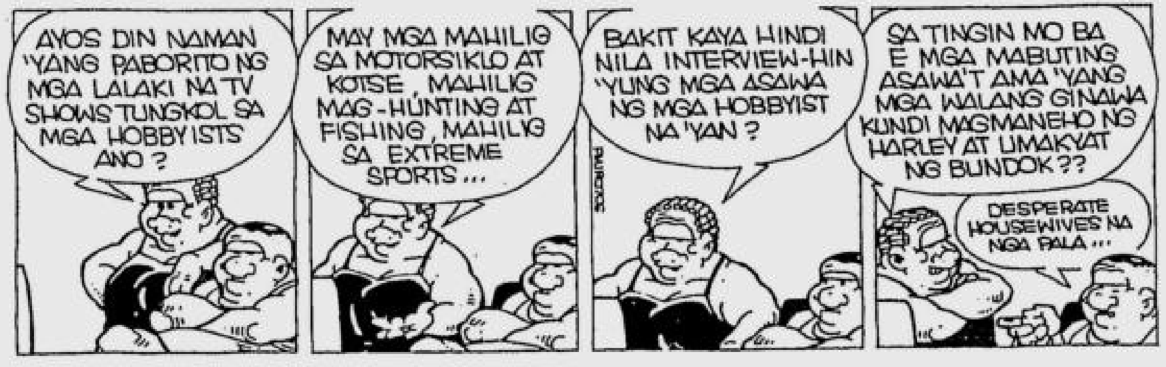
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


60TH ANNIVERSARY NA NG UP BETA SIGMA FRATERNITY
OO!
'FOLKWAYS' TAYO
YES, FOLKSONGS!
FIVE HUNDRED MILES FIVE HUNDRED MILES
SWEET VIOLETS SWEETER THAN ALL THE ROSES
RAKENROL!
ALAM KO YAN, AH!

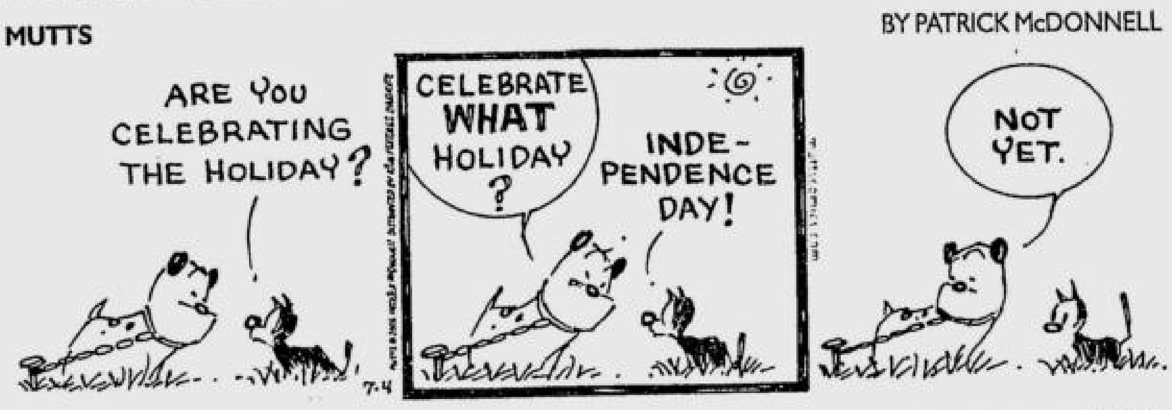
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WHO WAS AT THE DOOR?
KEESHA'S MOM. SHE BROUGHT DZIKO OVER FOR A PLAY DATE.
A PLAY DATE?? DZIKO AND WREN ARE JUST BABIES! WHAT CAN THEY PLAY?
I DON'T THINK THE PLAY DATE IS ONLY FOR THEM.

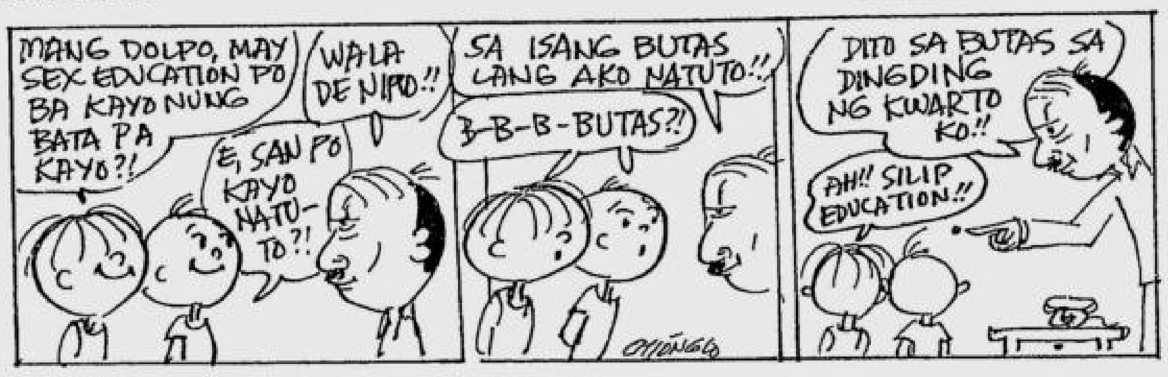
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


AYOS DIN NAMAN 'YANG PABORITO NG MGA LALAKI NA TV SHOWS TUNGKOL SA MGA HOBBYISTS ANO?
MAY MGA MAHILIG SA MOTORSIKLO AT KOTSE, MAHILIG MAG-HUNTING AT FISHING, MAHILIG SA EXTREME SPORTS...
BAKIT KAYA HINDI NILA INTERVIEW-HIN 'YUNG MGA ASAWA NG MGA HOBBYIST NA 'YAN?
SA TINGIN MO BA E MGA MABUTING ASAWA'T AMA 'YANG MGA WALANG GINAWA KUNDI MAGMANEHO NG HARLEY AT UMAKYAT NG BUNDOK??
DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES NA NGA PALA...

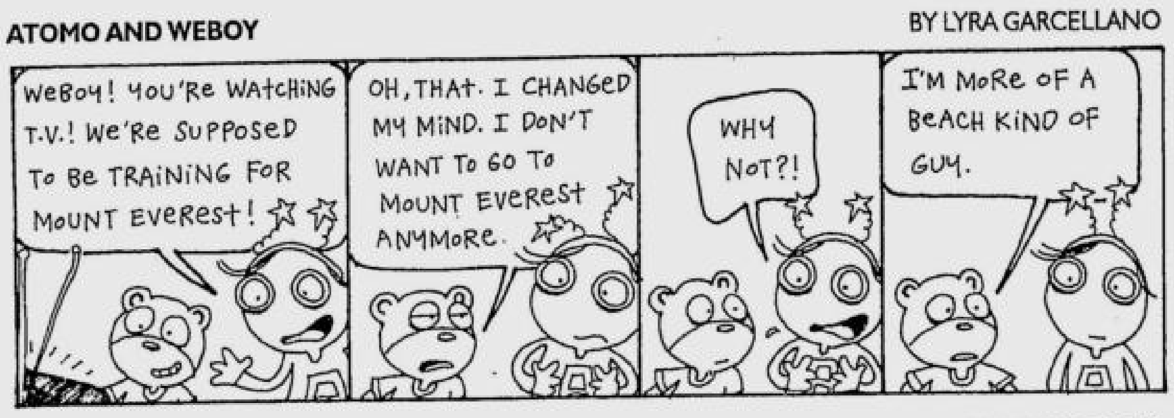
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ARE YOU CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAY?
CELEBRATE WHAT HOLIDAY?
INDE-PENDENCE DAY!
NOT YET.

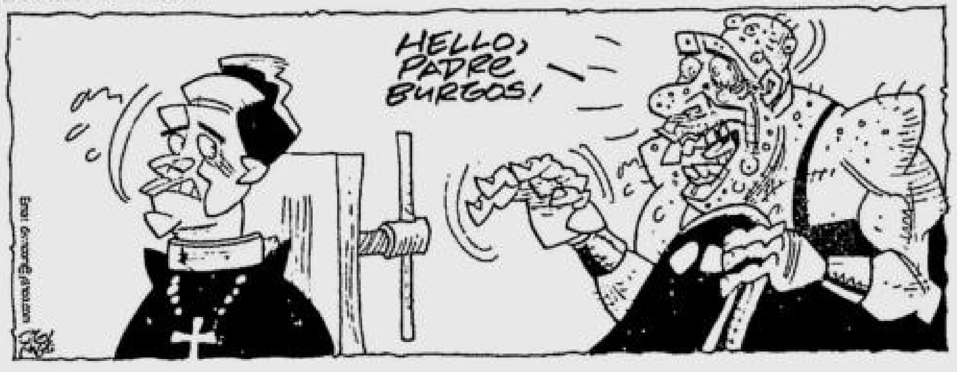
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MANG DOLPO, MAY SEX EDUCATION PO BA KAYO NUNG BATA PA KAYO?!
WALA DE NIPO!!
E, SAN PO KAYO NATUTO?!
SA ISANG BUTAS LANG AKO NATUTO!!
B-B-B-BUTAS?!
DITO SA BUTAS SA DINGDING NG KWARTO KO!!
AH!! SILIP EDUCATION!!

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

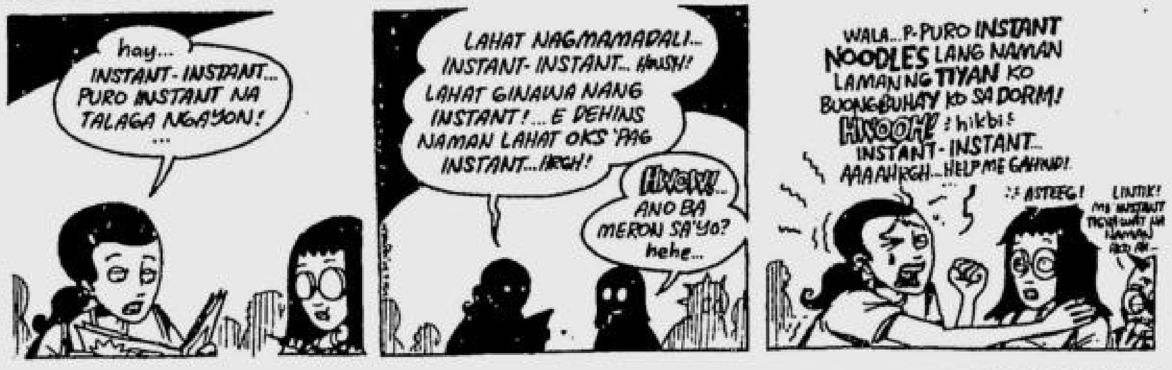

WEBOY! YOU'RE WATCHING T.V.! WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TRAINING FOR MOUNT EVEREST!
OH, THAT. I CHANGED MY MIND. I DON'T WANT TO GO TO MOUNT EVEREST ANYMORE.
WHY NOT?!
I'M MORE OF A BEACH KIND OF GUY.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

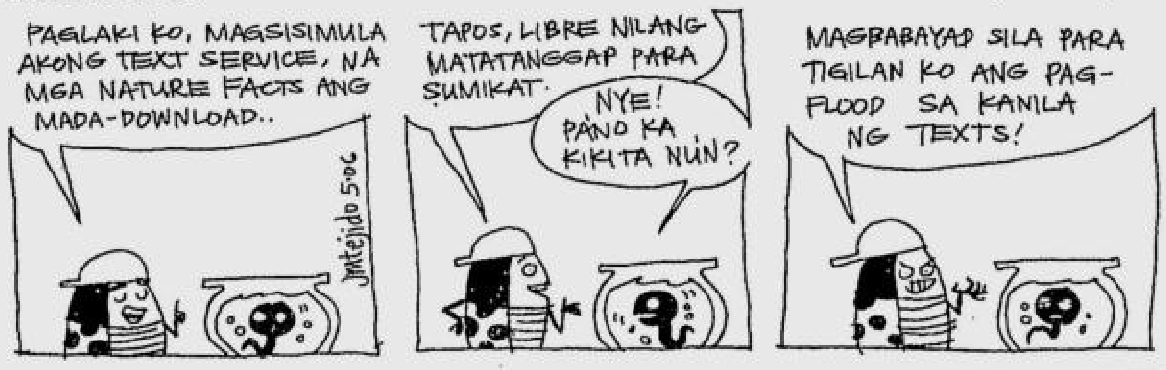

HELLO, PADRE BURGOS!

ANG TOTOONG DAHILAN KUNG BAKIT MAY SINUSUOT NA ITIM NA MASKARA ANG MGA BERDUGO

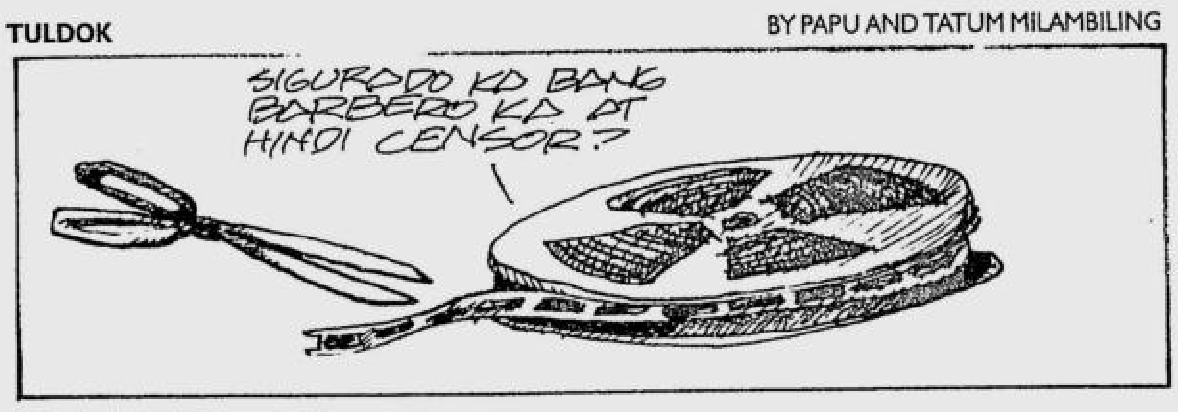
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


hay... INSTANT-INSTANT... PURO INSTANT NA TALAGA NGAYON! ...
LAHAT NAGMAMADALI... INSTANT-INSTANT... HAUSH! LAHAT GINAWA NANG INSTANT!... E DEHINS NAMAN LAHAT OKS 'PAG INSTANT... HRGH!
HWOW!.. ANO BA MERON SA'YO? hehe...
WALA... P-PURO INSTANT NOODLES LANG NAMAN LAMAN NG TIYAN KO BUONG BUHAY KO SA DORM! HWOOH! :hikbi: INSTANT-INSTANT... AAAAHRGH... HELP ME GAHND!
ASTEEG!
LINTIK!

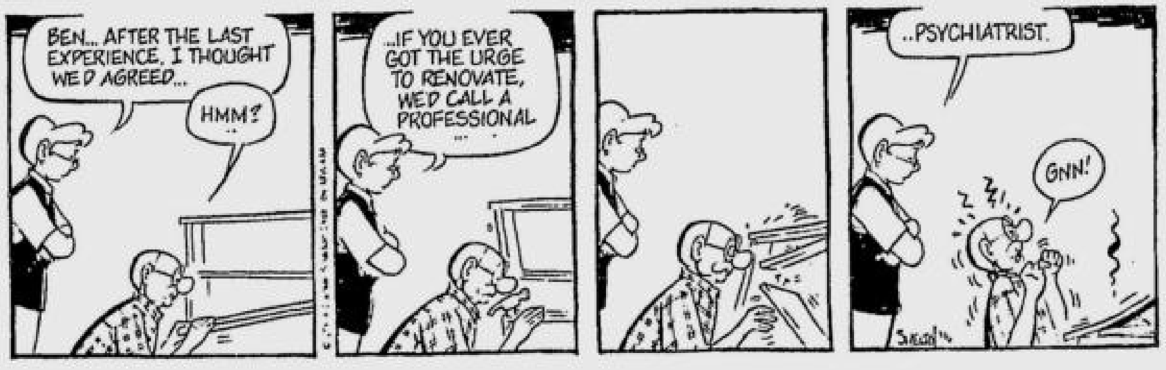
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAGLAKI KO, MAGSISIMULA AKONG TEXT SERVICE, NA MGA NATURE FACTS ANG MADA-DOWNLOAD..
TAPOS, LIBRE NILANG MATATANGGAP PARA SUMIKAT.
NYE! PANO KA KIKITA NUN?
MAGBABAYAD SILA PARA TIGILAN KO ANG PAG-FLOOD SA KANILA NG TEXTS!

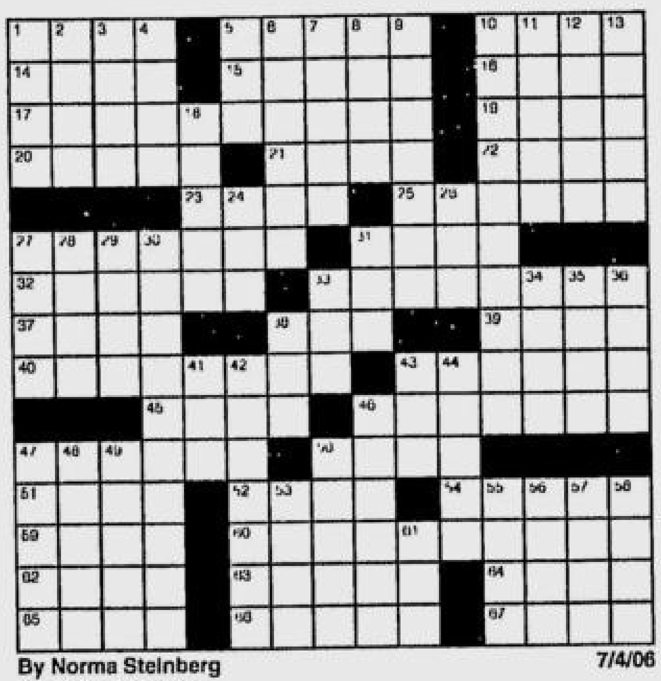
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SIGURADO KA BANG BARBERO KA AT HINDI CENSOR?

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


BEN... AFTER THE LAST EXPERIENCE, I THOUGHT WE'D AGREED...
HMM?
...IF YOU EVER GOT THE URGE TO RENOVATE, WE'D CALL A PROFESSIONAL
..PSYCHIATRIST.
GNN!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA

7/4/06

ACROSS
1 Low-__ diet
5 Yuletide song
10 Hogwash!
14 Woodwind
15 Love of Luigi
16 Sch. for Bruins
17 Keaton sculpture?
19 Shipshape
20 Fulton's power
21 Late July babies
22 Wife of Petruchio
23 Bad day for Caesar
25 Popped the top off
27 Overturned
31 Run smoothly
32 Sets to rest
33 Steno pad
37 Dessert tray options
38 Do the lawn
39 Strongly recommend
40 Lifted a barbell overhead
43 Yellow shade
45 October birthstone
46 Attempts to do
47 Principal-free
50 Brad of "Troy"
51 Backside
52 Portable music device
54 __ than that...
59 Vicinity
60 Hairdresser's insult?
62 Bellhop's burden
63 __ we meet again
64 Jai __
65 Thin strip of wood
66 Finals
67 Candidate Perot

DOWN
1 Corn holders?
2 Lie adjacent to
3 Ascended
4 Greek letter
5 Wheels
6 Moseyed
7 Rakes
8 Estimator's equivocation
9 Frees from captivity
10 Bed in a fallout shelter?
11 Vast quantity
12 List of candidates
13 Disliked intensely
18 Poet Dickinson
24 __ Plaines, IL
26 Med or school starter
27 Light knocks
28 Actress Lena
29 Entreaty
30 Cleric's background?
31 Mil. captive
33 Sign of assent
34 Spoken
35 Fairytale baddie
36 Piano parts
38 Gibson or Brooks
41 Audit pro
42 Large flatfish
43 Jazz devotee
44 Thespian
46 Morsel
47 Saudis and Omanis
48 "The Last Supper," e.g.
49 Last Greek letter
50 Dark red wines
53 Window section
55 Ski lift
56 Saintly symbol
57 Time periods
58 Baseball stat
61 Golfer Ernie

Monday's Puzzle Solved

L	A	H	R	■	B	A	L	K	S	■	O	P	U	S
A	G	U	E	■	E	M	A	I	L	■	V	I	T	O
Y	E	L	P	■	H	E	N	N	Y	P	E	N	N	Y
S	E	L	L	■	O	N	E	■	■	U	R	G	E	S
■	■	■	Y	I	E	L	D	■	G	A	R	B	■	■
L	E	G	E	N	D	■	H	O	R	R	I	F	I	C
I	N	U	S	E	■	S	A	G	A	■	D	U	N	E
N	O	L	■	■	M	C	J	O	B	■	■	D	D	S
E	L	L	S	■	I	R	I	S	■	M	E	D	I	A
D	A	Y	T	I	M	E	S	■	S	L	A	Y	E	R
■	■	■	A	N	E	W	■	L	A	I	R	D	■	■
A	L	A	N	D	■	■	E	A	T	■	N	U	T	S
F	U	Z	Z	Y	W	U	Z	Z	Y	■	I	D	E	A
A	A	A	A	■	O	S	I	E	R	■	N	D	A	K
R	U	N	S	■	W	O	O	D	S	■	G	Y	M	S

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7/4/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: Family means everything to you. Your loved ones appreciate and value your support, your generosity and your steadfast loyalty. In spite of this attention, you often need solitude to feel grounded or to be able to work on private projects. The year ahead is filled with exciting, new possibilities. You're off on a new path.
Birthdate of: Neil Simon, writer; Eva Marie Saint, actress; George Steinbrenner, sports owner.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Expect to hear from old flames and ex-lovers in the next few weeks. Retrograde Mercury is stirring up this part of your world! (Look good; living well is the best revenge.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Family reunions are likely at this time or in the month ahead. You might also have relatives camped out on your doorstep. (Stock the fridge.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Delays in transportation and communication will take place now and in the next few weeks. Pay your phone bill. Fix your car

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Checks in the mail will be late in the next few weeks Lots of delays to financial matters are likely. Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Mercury is now retrograde in your sign. That's why you can't find your keys, papers, books or clothes. Messages are confused. This will be over by next month.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's easy to doubt your abilities now. You don't even know why you feel this way! Don't worry. We all have feelings like this at times. They'll be gone in a few weeks.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Old friends from your past are back in your life. This is an opportunity to catch up on news. It's good to have history with others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might hear from a boss, parent or teacher you haven't heard from in a while. Possibly, old opportunities to promote your name will return once again. (Consider it a second chance.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Travel plans and possibly plans connected with schooling are delayed or even canceled. Your big ideas are stalled in the water! Don't worry; this setback is temporary

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's time to rehash old matters connected with shared property or anything held jointly with someone else. Finish up stuff with debt, insurance and taxes.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Ex-partners are definitely back in your world. This might surprise you; it might not. Perhaps it's a chance to give things a second, sober thought

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Things are pretty haywire at work. Deliveries are late; expect shortages, confused communications, and lost messages and papers to create delays and frustrations. Hang in there!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

			8			1	6	3
			7				9	
2				9	1			
8			4			9		
		2		6		7		
		1			9			8
			9	1				7
	4				6			
9	5	6			3			

Difficulty Level ★★

7/04

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	2	4	3	6	7	9	1	5
3	7	5	4	9	1	6	2	8
9	1	6	5	8	2	4	7	3
1	5	8	7	2	4	3	9	6
2	3	9	1	5	6	8	4	7
4	6	7	9	3	8	1	5	2
5	4	1	6	7	3	2	8	9
6	9	2	8	4	5	7	3	1
7	8	3	2	1	9	5	6	4

Difficulty Level ★

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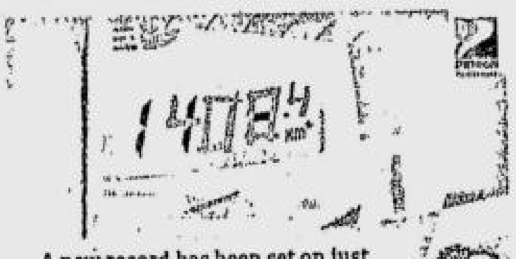

A new record has been set on just one full tank of Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Economy grew 6% in first half of 2006

Neda says exports, farm sector contributed to expansion

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY said the country's economy was estimated to have expanded by about 5.5 to 6 percent in the second quarter of the year on the strong performance of the export and agriculture sectors.

Neda Director General Romulo Neri told reporters that economic growth in the second quarter was higher than in the first three months despite challenges like non-passage of the 2006 national budget.

The expansion would keep the country on track of the government's target of attaining an annual GDP growth of between 5.5 and 6.2 percent for this year. In the first quarter, the economy grew by 5.5 percent.

GDP is the the total value of goods produced and services rendered in the local economy for a given period.

Neri noted that the Neda's estimate was partly anchored on the performance of the

ECONOMY/B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

RP moves to plug terrors' finance pipeline

/ B6

Peso rallies past 53 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY SURGED PAST THE 53:$1 barrier to close at a four-week high of 52.98 against the greenback as prospects of peaking US interest rates sustained an upbeat Asian currency trading.

The local currency closed at its strongest since June 7 this year when it finished at 52.925:$1.

The peso opened at 53 to a dollar and hit an intra-day low of 53.09 before closing at the intra-day high of 52.98, underpinned by the strengthening of the Japanese yen, which was boosted by a rosy survey on corporate sentiment in Asia's wealthiest nation.

"There are foreign inflows and it's a follow-through (rally) from last Friday," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters.

The local currency gained another 13 centavos from Friday's closing of 53.11 against the dollar.

Tetangco said the peso was likewise shored up yesterday by inflows from overseas Filipino workers, portfolio investments and export receipts.

On the domestic side, Tetangco reiterated that the peso was still being favored by good economic fundamentals.

"The macro fundamentals remain sound. The economy continues to grow. Inflation is under control. The (government's) fiscal position is showing further improvement, the BOP (balance of payments) is still in a surplus and we have a record level of GIR (gross international reserves)," Tetangco said.

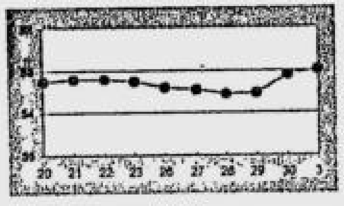
Volume at the spot foreign exchange market Philippine Dealing System, however, thinned to $265 million yesterday from $509 million on Friday.

However, some concerns remain on events such as the monetary tightening in Europe and Japan regardless of whether the US Federal Reserve ends its own two-year tightening cycle.

PESO/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



JUNE

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 52.98 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 3, 2006

¥ 114.66= $1

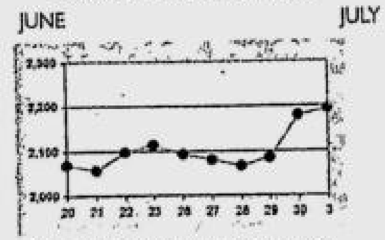
As of 5 p.m., June 28, 2006

GOLD: $619.50-620.00

per ounce Hong Kong, July 3, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks continue rally

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.74 PERCENT higher yesterday, extending gains to a third day on hopes the US Federal Reserve will soon call a halt to its rate hike cycle, dealers said.

They said sentiment was much more positive after a gain of 4.52 percent Friday following the latest Fed statement on the economy was taken to mean US interest rates had peaked, or were near to peaking out.

The composite index finished up 16.05 points to 2,194.84, its highest closing level for nearly a month, after trading between 2,178.79 and 2,196.52. Volume was 1.99 billion shares worth P1.16 billion.

STOCKS/ B2

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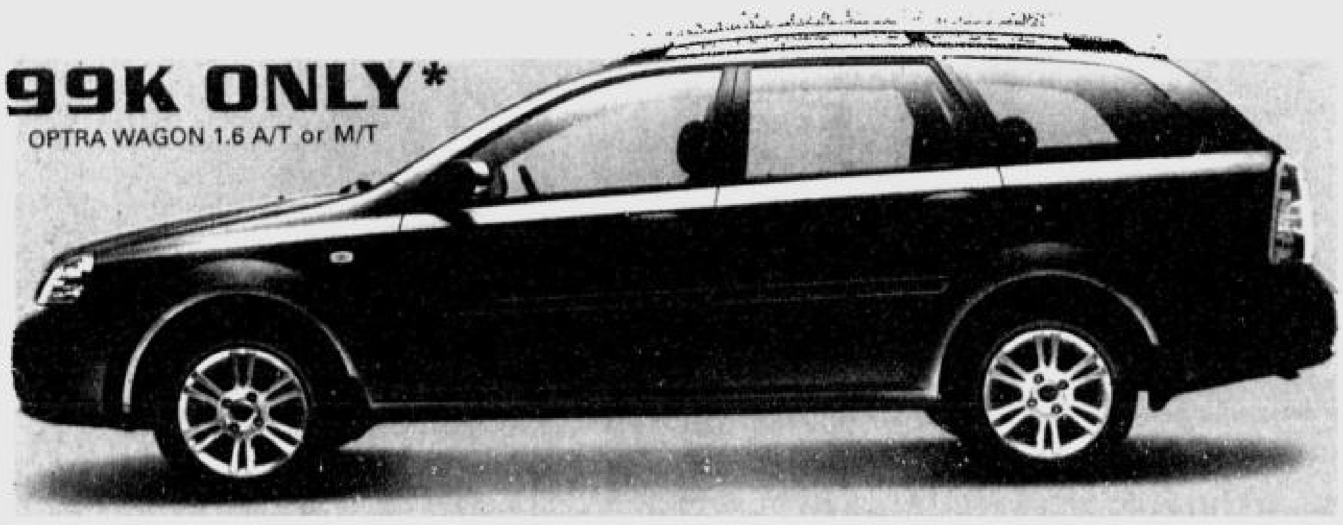

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			12	18	24	36	48	60	
Optra 1.6 LS M/T	738.000	89,000	57 781	39 594	30.704	21.850	17 504	15.25	8.844
Optra 1.6 LS A/T	783 000	89 000	61 787	42 339	32 833	23 366	18 718	16 311	9 383
Optra Special Ed. 1.6 A/T	795.000	99.000	61,965	42.461	32.927	23.423	18.772	16,357	9.527
Optra Wagon 1.6 M/T	808.000	99,000	63.124	43 264	33 542	23 871	19.123	16.663	9,683
Optra Wagon 1.6 A/T	863 000	99 000	67 129	46.000	35.671	25 386	20 336	17 720	10 222

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Bottled royal

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IN ANOTHER BOARDROOM BATTLE royale, the pesky minority stockholder of the controversial EPCIB, the company called Trans Middle East (TME), is asking the Bangko Sentral to investigate EPCIB for allowing certain people to sit in its board although they have obvious "conflict of interest."

That, in plain language, is called turning the table around on the SM group.

The SM group led by Tessie Sy, daughter of multibillionaire mall operator Henry Sy, engineered the ouster of TME from the EPCIB board only last May.

But TME secured a Supreme Court ruling that ordered (again, ORDERED) EPCIB to put back the TME representative to the board, a young lawyer named Martin Romualdez.

And now TME is asking the BSP, as overseer of the banking system, to apply its authority to disqualify the SM group-installed directors in the bank, plus a couple of highly paid "advisers."

TME said that the EPCIB by-laws ban the owners of other banks from sitting in the EPCIB board. Well, including their nominees of course.

That should cover all the four EPCIB board members who were elected by the SM group. Everybody knows, except perhaps the top officials of the BSP, that the SM group owns other banks such as China Bank and Banco de Oro, which the group is even using to take over EPCIB.

The SM group nominees to the EPCIB board are Tessie Sy, Edmundo Tan, Josefina Tan and Antonio Henson.

Tessie Sy served as chair of BDO only last year. She is today the president and director of Shoemart Inc., the very same owner of BDO. She also serves as vice chair and director of SM Investment, which bought into EPCIB.

Edmundo Tan is the managing partner of Tan Acut Lopez law offices, legal counsel of the Sy family and the SM group in labor cases, while Josefina Tan was also a BDO director. Antonio Henson is the president of SMIC.

For the same "conflict of interest," TME also called for the disqualification of the two "independent directors," namely, Jesus Tirona, who was also once a president of BDO, and Peter Garrucho, who is an executive of the Lopez group's First Holdings, which is claiming ownership of certain EPCIB shares.

As for the highly paid "advisers" of the EPCIB board, they are Alberto Reyes, former BSP deputy governor who still does consultancy work with BSP; Teodoro Montecillo, who was also a BDO director; and Antonio Pacis, director and corporate secretary of BDO.

TME also said that, since the general banking law prohibits government officials from taking any executive position in a private bank such as EPCIB, the president of SSS, Corazon dela Paz, should also not be allowed to take the position of EPCIB chair.

Now, if my memory serves me right, BSP already got the same complaint some time back. For some ungodly or religious reason, the BSP has yet to act on it.

To think, SSS and GSIS sank only P20 billion of our hard-earned, blood-and-sweat contribution into EPCIB. It does not concern the BSP of course.

Whose son-in-law is the BSP governor anyway?

* * *

Don't tell me that Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor do not talk to each other.

Last week, Ermita told media that this cute administration would withdraw the award of the Masinloc power plant (under the PSALM privatization plan) to the YNN consortium.

Ermita said YNN failed to fulfill its commitments. Thus, the power plant would have to be bid out.

Lo and behold, the ever glib Defensor (who has been moving from one position to another under this cute administration) contradicted Ermita. Defensor said that the deadline for YNN to make good its commitments, well, would be extended.

Subsequent developments told us that Defensor opened his big mouth again. This, or he just lost in the power play inside Malacañang over the Masinloc contract.

Defensor said that, for one, this country must please its neighbor Malaysia, since that country played a role in the peace negotiations with the MILF.

It is hard to say if Defensor is only applying for membership of the Malaysian royalty or he just took the job as spokesperson of the Malaysian government, but definitely he is not into the bottle habit and he must still be in control of his senses.

It just so happens that YNN sold its contract on the Masinloc plant to a Malaysian firm called Ranhill for $8 million—i.e. handsome profit.

Moreover, Defensor said that nobody else (outside of YNN, that is) could match the price offered by the consortium, which was $560 million, and so there would not be any rebidding of the power plant.

I see! So, from now on, bidders just have to submit a price as high as the stratosphere, take their time to look for investors, and then change the contract and all that to please the investors, because anyway this cute administration cannot do anything about the whole darn thing due to the high bid price? Wow!

In business, anyway, they are already whispering about Defensor's possible involvement in the Malacañang group that was railroading the YNN-Psalm-ERC-Ranhill deal.

For instance, they talk about those two power brokers from Mindanao who are either former or current government officials, and the family of one of them happens to be involved in the energy business.

Both are said to be rather close to Defensor.

Not for anything else, but should those power brokers succeed, they would only punish us down here with higher power rates. For instance, the YNN-Ranhill deal requires Masinloc to obtain a supply contract with Meralco.

Today Masinloc sells electricity at P2.80 per kwh. Because of the YNN deal, the rate can go as high as P5 per kwh. Who do you think will pay for it all?

Economy grew 6% in first half of 2006

From page B1

agriculture sector, which was said to have grown by 5 percent year-on-year in the second quarter. Output by the agriculture sector accounts for about a fifth of GDP.

The Neda earlier said the positive performance of the agriculture sector this year was due to the absence of the El Niño weather problem that hit the sector last year. Relatively better weather condition helped improve rice and corn harvest, the agriculture department earlier said.

Exports in the first four months of the year, meanwhile, expanded by 15.2 percent year-on-year to $14.75 billion from $12.81 billion in the same period last year, the National Statistics Office reported earlier.

The January-to-April performance of the export sector boost the country's chance of exceeding the government's 8-percent export growth target for the full year.

The target for the year was a revision from the original 10 percent after economic managers noticed the weak performance of the export sector in the early part of the year.

But after a 0.7-percent year-on-year drop in export revenues in January, the sector began posting growths in February.

Officials said the over-performance of exporters as of April was attributed to the growing demand for electronics worldwide. Electronics is the country's main export earner, accounting for at least 60 percent of the total.

The rise in demand for electronics was attributed to cyclical reasons, having been on a downtrend last year. The electronics industry said products benefiting from an increasing demand included laptop computers, iPODs, and MP3 players.

Peso . . .

From page B1

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said: "Of course I'm concerned that if it's the sum total of these three large groups trying to internally work out their own problems, this might put pressure on emerging economies. What we intend to do is try to evaluate it with Tetangco and (National Treasurer) Omar Cruz."

Teves' basic contention was that for as long as the Philippines could maintain strong economic fundamentals, it would be able to lure offshore investors back once the uncertainties in the global markets have fizzled out.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo, however, said he believed that prospective interest increases by the central banks of Europe and Japan would not have as much impact on the Philippines as the US Fed's moves.

Stocks

From page B1

The broader all-shares index advanced 5.51 points to 1,375.40.

Gainers outnumbered losers 38 to 30, with 45 stocks unchanged.

"The market seems to have reversed itself," said Harry Liu of Summit Securities. "We're now seeing a recovery after losing heavily in the past two months." *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 3, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	31.5	30.5	31	562,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50	50	48.5	49	462,300
China Banking Corp.	870	870	870	870	40
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	600
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	73	73	73	73	31,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	34.5	35.5	34	34.5	1,117,000
Philippine National Bank	33	33	33	33	500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18	18	18	18	14,000
Security Bank Corp.	44.5	45.5	44.5	45.5	15,200
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
Bankard Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	110,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31	31	31	31	91,300
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	210	210	210	210	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2110	2110	2050	2050	50
Ivantage Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.22	1,430,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Gen Corp.	43	43	43	43	3,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45	46	44.5	45	1,360,300
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	16,100
Manila Electric Co. B	22.25	22.25	22	22	977,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.3	7.5	7.3	7.4	2,578,000
Petron Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.75	3.85	1,754,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	150,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
CADP Group Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	60,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23.25	23	23.25	20,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	31.5	31.5	31	31.5	720,000
Pancake House Inc.	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	5,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	38,300
San Miguel Corp. B	72.5	72.5	71	71.5	252,600
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.25	629,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	1,300,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Engineering Equip. Inc	1.44	1.48	1.42	1.48	4,116,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	60,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	3,000,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	200,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Ayala Corp.	370	372.5	365	370	42,760
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.55	0.54	0.54	4,160,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	529,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	2,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.86	1.88	1.8	1.8	816,000
APC Group Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	600,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	1,490,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.02	4,757,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.85	2,938,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.75	2.8	2.75	2.8	152,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6	6	6	6	1,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	20,000
SM Investments Corp.	214	214	213	213	202,660
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.76	0.78	0.76	0.76	290,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	900,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	11.75	12	11.5	12	2,550,300
Belle Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	10,793,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.96	2.04	1.96	2.04	3,964,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	12,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.57	13,710,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	3,200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.28	1.3	3,099,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.41	0.41	430,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.5	1.5	67,591,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.215	0.215	0.205	0.21	5,380,000
Primex Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	50,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	120,300
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,750,000
SM Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.6	7.7	480,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	2,400,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15	15.75	15	15.75	68,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.24	1,230,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	935	940	930	930	24,530
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.55	3.45	3.55	1,271,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1830	1875	1830	1875	160,300
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	50,000
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	700,000
Ionics Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	51,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	3,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	12,200,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.2	1.12	1.2	21,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.035	0.031	0.034	709,500,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	24,200
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	1,441,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	650,000
		EDUCATION			
IPeople Inc.	3.15	3.15	3	3	490,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	3.45	3.5	3.45	3.5	15,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2.02	2	2.02	181,000
Paxys Inc.	11.5	11.5	11	11.25	215,600
		MINING			
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	68,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.2	3,701,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	8,950,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	330,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	24,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	6,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	177,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.4	4.45	4.3	4.35	10,293,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.4	4.45	4.3	4.35	18,133,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28	28	28	876,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	600,000
		OIL			
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	1,820,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.01	0.012	0.01	0.01	695,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	77,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.28	1.3	1.24	1.26	972,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	330,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	18	18	17.75	18	6,244,200
		PREFERRED			
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
		WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.			
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14.75	15.75	14.75	15.75	283,500

DISCLOSURES

CADP Group Corp. has declared a cash dividend of P0.06 per share for all stockholders of record as of July 14, payable on July 31.

***

JAMES L. Go, Robert Coyiuto Jr., John Gokongwei Jr., Lance Y. Gokongwei, Gabriel Singson, Perry L. Pe, Miguel Coyiuto, James Coyiuto and Patrick Henry Go have been elected directors of **Oriental Petroleum and Minerals Corp.** on June 30. Also elected as independent directors were Amparo V. Barcelon and Ricardo Balbido Jr.

***

WALTER W. Brown, Victor P. Juat, Annabelle P. Brown, Robertino E. Pizarro, Patricia B. Juat and Jose Ma. R. Francisco have been elected directors of **A. Brown Co. Inc.** on June 30. Elpidio M. Paras, on the other hand, has been elected as independent director. Meanwhile, Alba Romeo and Co. has been appointed as external auditor, whereas Fidelity Stock Transfers Inc. has been appointed as the corporation's stock transfer agent.

***

CIRILO L. Manlangit and Lourdes G. Clemente have tendered their resignations as chair and vice chair, respectively, and as directors of Suntrust Home Developers Inc. effective June 30. Appointed as their replacements were Enrique M. Soriano III (chair) and Ferdinand B. Masi (vice chair).

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

July 3, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.781616	1.000000	53.2200
Japan	Yen	0.006830	0.008738	0.4650
United Kingdom	Pound	1.445990	1.850000	98.4570
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100634	0.128751	6.8521
Switzerland	Franc	0.639254	0.817862	43.5266
Canada	Dollar	0.701630	0.897666	47.7738
Singapore	Dollar	0.494100	0.632151	33.6431
Australia	Dollar	0.580437	0.742611	39.5218
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.073308	2.652590	141.1708
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208459	0.266702	14.1939
Brunei	Dollar	0.492543	0.630159	33.5371
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000108	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020491	0.026216	1.3952
UAE	Dirham	0.212812	0.272272	14.4903
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.279400	68.0897
Argentina	Peso	0.253566	0.324412	17.2652
Brazil	Real	0.361107	0.462000	24.5876
Denmark	Kroner	0.134052	0.171506	9.1275
India	Rupee	0.017040	0.021801	1.1602
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212858	0.272331	14.4935
Mexico	New Peso	0.068862	0.088102	4.6888
New Zealand	Dollar	0.475928	0.608902	32.4058
Norway	Kroner	0.125643	0.160748	8.5550
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012983	0.016611	0.8840
South Africa	Rand	0.109623	0.140252	7.4642
Korea	Won	0.000824	0.001054	0.0561
Sweden	Kroner	0.108644	0.138999	7.3975
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024145	0.030891	1.6440

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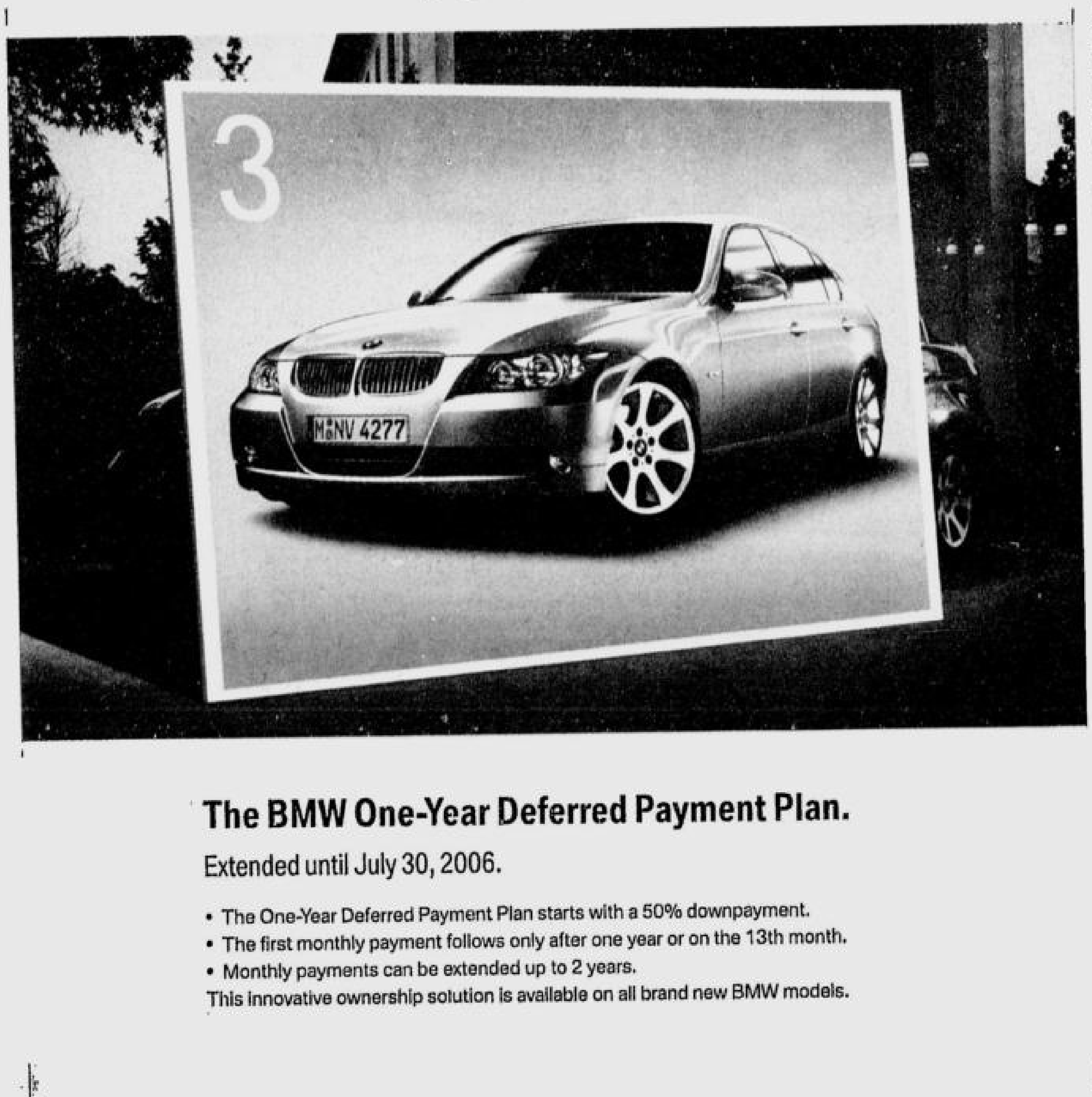

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Politicking, brain drain take its toll on Philippine growth, economist says

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINES IS BEING LEFT behind in the Asia-wide growth, led by China and India, due to the migration of skilled and talented Filipino workers, and constant politicking, says Mastercard International economic advisor Yuwa Hedrick-Wong.

According to the economic advisor, the Philippines is a "tragedy," where a large number of talented Filipinos prefer to work abroad and are willing to downgrade their skills due to the lack of job opportunities in their own country.

"It creates a vicious cycle," Hedrick-Wong said during a recent briefing in Singapore. "Nowhere in Asia can you see this juxtaposition—the lack of opportunities for talented people due to domestic politics, or the political elite propagating their interests."

He said that the growth of the Philippine economy is largely driven by remittances from overseas Filipino workers, which allows the "political elite" to do nothing.

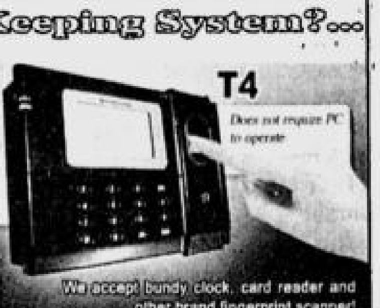
"The OFW (growth phenomenon) breaks up families and reflects the horrific brain drain," Hedrick-Wong added. "Hundreds of medical doctors took retraining to work as nurses overseas ... they are prepared to downgrade their skills in order to work overseas. All these allow the elite to do nothing."

He said that the Philippines is blessed with a talented pool of English proficient and well-trained workers, but politics has continued to drag down economic prospects.

He noted that the famous People Power revolution has not truly instituted any real change in the economy, adding that ordinary people are being manipulated by elite groups to serve their personal interests.

He added that the Philippines must work hard to tap into the growth in Asia, instead of relying on traditional markets such as the United States for trade.

The Philippines should also review its competitive strategy and take advantage of its talented people to grow in sectors such as entertainment and fashion, where the Filipinos, he claims, have a natural competitive advantage.



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T-bill rates decline as US Fed pressure seen to ease

Treasury also expects regional rates to let up

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY BILLS RATES YESTERDAY FELL across all maturities as the auction for short-term government securities was swamped by banks amid perception that the US Federal Reserve would finally put an end to hikes in its interest rate.

The bellwether 91-day T-bill rate dropped 42.6 basis points to fetch 6.074 percent, with tenders for the three-month debt instrument reaching P6.37 billion compared with the government's debt offering of only P2 billion for each T-bill tenor.

"The market is now more relaxed," National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters in a briefing after the auction. "There is not much pressure on it because of the expected easing of rates abroad."

"The rate for the 182-day bill settled 31 basis points lower at 6.985 percent. The six-month bills were likewise highly oversubscribed, with bids reaching P6.635 billion.

The 364-day bills fetched 7.815 percent, declining by 15.8 basis points. Tenders for the one-year bills were highest, amounting to P8.685 billion.

Last week, the Fed again raised its federal funds rate by a quarter of a percentage point to settle at 5.25 percent. But US monetary authorities hinted that the Fed may put an end to the hikes soon now that the US economy is slowing down.

The Fed had been increasing its rate since June 2004—recording 17 hikes all in all—in a bid to counter inflationary pressures.

Cruz said the Bureau of the Treasury expected that the rising T-bill rates in the previous weeks would not last long, noting it was expected for the Fed to have reached, if not nearly reached, the end of its need to increase its rates.

An increase in US interest rates makes bonds issued by perceivably riskier emerging markets like the Philippines less attractive, therefore forcing domestic interest rates to rise as well.

With this development, Cruz said that domestic T-bill rates are expected to ease, especially now that the government is meeting its fiscal targets.

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In Subic, P40-M school opens

A SOUTH KOREAN firm that plans to put up in Subic one of the world's biggest shipyards has opened a P40-million school near the Freeport, where prospective employees would learn the skills needed in the billion-dollar operation.

Armand C. Arreza, administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said the Training Center located, in the center of Subic town, was the most modern facility of its kind country, and would serve the need of Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Co.

The facility, which opened last weekend, has three classrooms, 70 welding booths, one pipefitting room, four painting rooms and a working area that may accommodate up to 200 trainees and instructors.

HHIC Philippines managing director Myung Goo Kwon said in a statement that a pool of qualified and competent work force, which is currently "remotely available" in the country, was a critical factor in the success of its shipbuilding project.

"Equipped with the most modern facilities and with qualified Korean instructors, the Training Center would be the cornerstone in developing and honing the skills of Filipino trainees," Kwon said.

The project is expected to create some 30,000 jobs, and put the country in the map of the global shipbuilding industry.

Arreza said the planned shipyard would be the fourth-largest in the world, and would be able to handle big vessels. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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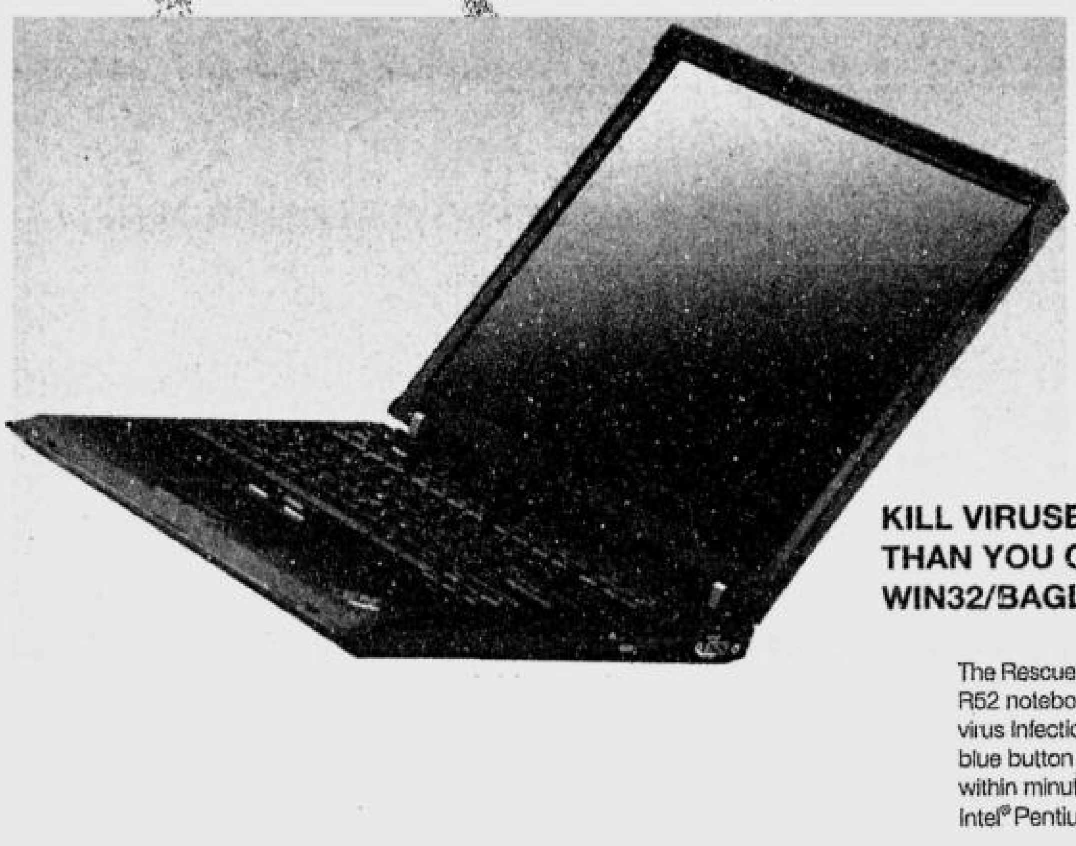

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Fiscal officials decide to keep government's '06 revenue targets

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO Teves yesterday said policymakers had decided to keep the government's revenue targets for 2006, hoping to maintain the country's improving fiscal track record.

Teves said that any adjustments in the way the government has set its fiscal targets over the medium term would have to begin with 2007 onward.

"Right now, we are trying to get as much revenue as we can," Teves told reporters. "We like to have a good track record. Let's talk about 2007 (and succeeding years) later."

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), an attached agency of the DOF and the government's main revenue source, had asked that part of its tax collection target for the year be transferred to other collecting agencies, claiming that the goal assigned to it was too high.

The BIR was tasked this year to collect P675.4 billion in taxes—about 25 percent higher than the P542 billion it collected last year.

Revenue Commissoner Jose Mario Bufiag had particularly asked that some of its value-added tax collection target be transferred to the Bureau of Customs, explaining that the BOC has the ability to collect more VAT on oil products given that there are more imported oil than there are domestically produced.

Bufiag also asked that part of its target on documentary stamp tax be transferred to the Bureau of the Treasury because of the latter's recent moves to cancel auctions for Treasury bills and bonds. The cancellation of auction schedules reduced the BIR's collection of tax on government securities, he explained.

But Teves said that the changing of revenue targets may not be practical, now that the government is already in the middle of the fiscal year.

He said it was the responsibility of fiscal authorities to deliver the promised revenue from the fiscal reform measures passed by Congress.

He said the promised revenue had to be realized so that the government could easily go back to Congress for new revenue-raising measures if needed.

Measures passed to provide fiscal relief for the deficit-ridden government included the Reformed VAT law, the Sin Tax Law and the Lateral Attrition Law.

The VAT law raised the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent and expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity among others.

The Sin Tax law raised the excise tax rates applied on cigarettes and alcohol products, while the Lateral Attrition Law provided a mechanism that would grant incentives to revenue collectors who were able meet their revenue targets and penalties to those who would fail to do so.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz, head of the Bureau of the Treasury, said it was not practical to change the targets in the middle of the fiscal year, explaining that the fiscal program for the year has already been factored in by investors in their investment plans.

"The 2006 revenue targets are all set in the minds of investors and the (fiscal) program has been launched," Cruz told reporters. "We would like to live by that."

Michelle V. Remo

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Center for Health Development – Bicol
BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Naga City
Telephone Nos. (054) 473-75-78; (054) 473-89-36
E-mail Address: slopez_bmc@yahoo.com
Fax No. (054) 473-89-36; (054) 473-7578; (054) 811-2227
Website: http://www.doh.gov.ph/bmc/index.htm

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER**, through General Appropriations Act of 2006 intends to apply specified sums for the following projects:
   - a. **Project: Procurement of Medical Gases – (IAEB No. 2006-08)**

Approved Budget for the Contract	SEVEN MILLION THREE HUNDRED NINETY FOUR THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED TWO & 95/100 Philippine Pesos
Sale of Bid Documents	July 3, 2006 to August 3, 2006
Pre-Bid Conference	August 3, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
Bid Opening	August 15, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
Price of Bid Documents	Two Thousand Pesos (PhP 2,000.00)

   - b. **Project: Procurement of Various Pharmaceuticals – (IAEB No. 2006-09)**

Approved Budget for the Contract	THIRTY FIVE MILLION TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY NINE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINETY & 08/100 Philippine Pesos
Sale of Bid Documents	July 3, 2006 to August 4, 2006
Pre-Bid Conference	August 4, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
Bid Opening	August 16, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
Price of Bid Documents	Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (PhP 3,500.00)

   Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the above stated projects. Delivery of Goods required as stated in the Special Conditions of the Contract for each project.
   The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon; 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.**, except weekends and Holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents for each project may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as specified above. The method of payment will be in the form of Cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address, date and time stated above. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following forms, in the amount at least equal to and not lower than a percentage of the ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency:

1.	**Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit**	**(1% of ABC)**
2.	**Bank Guarantee**	**(1.5% of ABC)**
3.	**GSIS Surety Bond**	**(2.5% of ABC)**

   Late bids shall not be accepted.
7. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representative/s who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

Contact Address
BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
Concepcion Pequeña, Naga City
Telephone Nos. (054) 473-7578, (054) 473-8936
E-mail Address: slopez_bmc@yahoo.com
Fax No. (054) 473-8936; (054) 811-2227
Website: http://www.doh.gov.ph/bmc/index.htm

Contact Person
ANGELITA A. AGAWA, MPA
Chief Administrative Officer and BAC Chairman

(Sgd.) ANGELITA A. AGAWA, MPA
BAC Chairman

(PDI – July 4 & 10, 2006)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
CAMARINES NORTE PROVINCIAL OFFICE

NOTICE OF COVERAGE

Pursuant to Section 7 of Republic Act (RA) No 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, the Republic of the Philippines, thru the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), hereby subjects under the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) your landholding with the following description.

	Landowner	Location	Area (Has.)	TD/Title No.
1.	ROLANDO ASIS	Aguit-it, Vinzons, Camarines Norte	49.9836	T-42834
2.	A-5 FARMS CORP.	Aguit-it, Vinzons, Camarines Norte	9 5004	P-11856
3.	AMADO PAJARILLO	Napilihan, Vinzons, Camarines Norte	18.1461	014-0242
4.	ISABEL MACARO (RB of Paracale, Inc.)	P. Malaki, Paracale, Camarines Norte	9 5767	T-1044
5.	GLORIA CRISOSTOMO, etal	Calasgasan, Daet, Camarines Norte	28 4708	T-15216
6.	GLORIA CRISOSTOMO, etal	Calasgasan, Daet, Camarines Norte	7.8704	T-15223
7	AUGUSTO DE CASTRO	San Isidro, Daet, Camarines Norte	7.1122	T-8887
8.	GLORIA ROQUE	San Francisco/San Jose, Talisay, C. Norte	6 5958	P-10353
9	MAURA CONCEBIDO	Calasgasan, Daet, Camarines Norte	10 0000	T-11294
10.	CECILIO LUNA, JR.	Calasgasan, Daet, Camarines Norte	9 9813	T-11293
11.	YOLANDA LUNA	Calasgasan, Daet, Camarines Norte	7 5885	T-11295
12.	JOSE ROLDA	Calasgasan, Daet, Camarines Norte	10 0000	T-11251
13.	ERLINDA TIUSECO	Calasgasan, Daet, Camarines Norte	10.0000	T-11297
14.	ROMUALDO NAVIA, LUISA HERRERA, & CHRISTOPHER NAVIA/RB of Paracale	Canapawan, Labo, Camarines Norte	8.1618	T-56793
15.	LEONOR MANLAPAZ	Malatap, Labo, Camarines Norte	8.2865	T-5511
16.	QUEZON DEVT. BANK/Dominga Mago	Baay, Labo, Camarines Norte	3 9846	T-547
17.	CLARENCE OSEA	Macogon, Labo, Camarines Norte	16 3231	T-10950
18.	CESAR LUZARRAGA	Daguit, Labo, Camarines Norte	5 3454	T-11284
19.	FORTUNATA LUZARRAGA	BS III, Labo, Camarines Norte	3.3614	P-4364
20.	CESAR LUZARRAGA	Daguit, Labo, Camarines Norte	3 5762	T-11285
21.	MILDA, PRICILLA & BEATA GUINTO	San Felipe, Basud, C. Norte	19 1609	T-12290
22.	GREGORIO SORIA	Taisan, Basud, Camarines Norte	10 4530	P-436
23.	MARCOS FLORES JR.	Mocong, Basud, Camarines Norte	12 0334	P-2535
24.	VIDA VINZONS	Tuaca, Basud, Camarines Norte	14 0828	T-10887
25.	CLETO ASPREC, JR	Pagsangahan, Basud, Camarines Norte	23 8951	P-471
26.	WILLIAM MARTINEZ	San Jose, Basud, Camarines Norte	6.3258	P7870
27.	DBP/SPS LETECIA SORIA & FRANCISCO HERICO	Mandazo, Basud, Camarines Norte	18.1658	P-11053
28.	UND INT OF JOB, OSCAR, & LUZ, all FUENTEBELLA	Plandel, Basud, Camarines Norte	11 3852	T-12366
29.	JOEL PAJARILLO	Bagong Silang 3, Labo, Camarines Norte	14.0722	T-10058
30.	UND INT OF AMADO GUZMAN & HONESTO GUZMAN	Cabusay, Labo, Camarines Norte	15.1568	T-10911
11.	SPS AMADO GUZMAN & AMPARO VISPERAS GUZMAN	Cabusay, Lago, Camarines Norte	1.7932	T-11217
32.	RICARDO COOTAUCO	Tigbinan, Labo, Camarines Norte	8 1901	P-3198
33.	ELENA PIMENTEL	Matanlang, Labo, Camarines Norte	8 5241	P-4755
34.	LAMBERTO PIMENTEL	Mal. Basud, Labo, Camarines Norte	4 0000	T-12681
35.	SIMEON ENERO	San Lorenzo, Sta. Elena, C. Norte	13 3271	T-14069
16.	SALLY RAMOS	Malagonol-Tacad, Basud, C. Norte	10 0000	T-22958
37.	FRANCISCO REAL	Plandel, Basud, Cams. Norte	8 4281	T-11540
38.	ARLENE REYES	Angas, Basud, Cams. Norte	8 0000	T-19165
39.	JOHNABEL SUBIA	Basud, Cams. Norte	7 1651	T-22879
40.	JOSE GONZALES	Potot, Basud, Cams. Norte	6.4406	P-141
41.	DONATO DELO SANTOS	Mocong, Basud, C. Norte	24 0000	P-173
42.	UND. SHARES OF JONATHAN SUBIA & JOHNALD SUBIA	Basud, Cams. Norte	12.7218	T-2287
43.	EFREN, LEOLA, ROSANNA & JULIO all surnamed LUZARRAGA	San Jose, Basud, Cams. Norte	25.0000	T-11340
44.	Sps. HENRY T. ECO & DELIA L. ECO	Mancayo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	4 1829	T-23651
45	JUANITA BALON	Cal. Norte, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	3 8892	P-7788
46	JUANITA BALON	Sto Domingo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	2 0414	P-7789
47	JUANITA BALON	Sto Domingo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	1.3333	P-7784
48	PEDRO C. VELACRUZ, Jr.	Mancayo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	3 4831	T-13571
49	PEDRO V. VELACRUZ	Mancayo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	2 8045	P-4740
50	PEDRO V. VELACRUZ	Mancayo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	1 1120	P-9288
51	PEDRO VELACRUZ	Mancayo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	1 5531	P-8219
52	PEDRO VELACRUZ	Mancayo, Vinzons, Cam. Norte	2 7170	P-6219
53	QUIRINO RICAFRENTE/REHABILITATION FINANCING CORP.	Lugui, Labo, Cam. Norte	12.5155	P-1003

Whenever applicable, you have the right or privilege to:
1) apply for an exemption clearance or for exclusion from CARP coverage,
2) choose your retention area not exceeding five (5) hectares pursuant to Section 6 of R A No 6657;
3) nominate your children who may qualify as preferred beneficiary/ies to the subject landholding.

To exercise any of the above rights/privileges, the necessary application or petition should be filed before the Government incurs any expense necessary for acquisition and distribution of the landholdings, within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of this Notice of Coverage (NOC) or in cases when publication is necessary thirty (30) days from the date of its publication.

Within thirty (30) days from receipt of this NOC, you are required to submit to the DAR Provincial Office (DARPO) a sketch map of the area you intend to retain. Otherwise, the DAR will identify and choose the retention area in your behalf.

The privilege to nominate your child/ren who may qualify as preferred beneficiary/ies is waived if you fail to submit to the DAR Municipal Office (DARMO), within thirty (30) days from receipt of this NOC, the proper application with the complete names of your nominees, their address, birth dates, and other relevant information.

Please submit to the DARMO, within thirty (30) days from receipt of this NOC, a Statement of Production and Net Income, or the applicable audited financial statement, which shall include, among others, total production and cost of operations on a per crop basis and selling price/s (farm gate) on the said landholding which shall be considered in the determination of the land value pursuant to Section 17 of R A No 6657 and other applicable rules and regulations. In the event that you fail to submit the above documents within the prescribed period, the DAR and LBP shall adopt applicable industry data or in the absence thereof, conduct an industry study on the specific crop which shall be used in determining the production, cost and net income of the subject landholding.

Pursuant to Executive Order No 405, dated 14 June 1990 the LBP shall determine the land value of the subject landholding. You shall be notified accordingly as soon as the DAR receives the LBP's Memorandun of Valuation.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) HUBERTO L. VILLARAZA, CESO V
Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer

(PDI—July 4, 2006)

NSO urged to review report on RP manufacturing output

Neda cites discrepancies in survey, export figures

By Michelle V. Remo

ECONOMIC PLANNING SECRETARY Romulo Neri has told the National Statistics Office (NSO) to review, and possibly even revise, the reported output by the country's manufacturing industry.

Neri, who is also the director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), said the results of the Monthly Integrated Survey of Selected Industries (Missi) could be grossly understated because of the old samples used.

Missi is a report on the the manufacturing sector's production in terms of volume and value.

Volume is measured by the volume of production index or VoPI, while value is gauged by the value of production index or VaPI.

"The survey may be based on old samples, and therefore needs to be updated," Neri yesterday told reporters at the sidelines of the annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific group on antimoney laundering held at the Philippine International Convention Center in Manila.

The NSO has reported that the output of the manufacturing sector, as measured by VoPI, had declined consistently in the first four months of the year.

According to the Missi, volume of production dropped year-on-year by 8.2 percent in January, 12.1 percent in February, 7.8 percent in March and 13.9 percent in April.

Dennis Arroyo, Neda director for policy and planning, earlier said the reported drop in the volume of production was surprising given the robust growth in exports. He said an increase in exports normally should be partly attributed to improving production of the manufacturing sector.

Some analysts, however, said that the country's exports are largely buoyed by electronics, pointing out that the domestic manufacturing sector is not highly concentrated on electronics.

Earlier, the NSO reported that exports in the first four months of the year reached $14.75 billion, reflecting a 15.2-percent year-on-year increase from the $12.81 billion recorded in the same period last year.

The growth in exports in the January-to-April period was much higher than the 8-percent target set for the entire year.

NERI

Economic authorities said the increase in exports was attributed to the growing demand for electronics in the world market. Electronics is the country's major export product, accounting for at least 60 percent of total export earnings.

Neri said the economy likely posted as much as close to 6 percent growth in the second quarter of the year, not factoring in the Missi report on manufacturing output.

'Erap City' firm pulls out of MRT-7 bid

By Daxim L. Lucas

A CONSTRUCTION FIRM ONCE LINKED TO the controversial Erap City mass housing project has withdrawn its bid to build a rail link from North Ave. in Quezon City to Bulacan, according to the transportation department.

In a message to reporters, Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) Assistant Secretary Roberto R. Castañares said New Kanlaon Construction Inc. has pulled out of the bidding for the Metro Rail Transit Authority's Line-7 project.

Despite the withdrawal, the official expressed optimism that the project's timetable will remain on schedule. He added that it may even move ahead since New Kanlaon's exit will mean the elimination of the Swiss challenge process, which normally takes anywhere from six to eight months to complete.

"The would-be challenger for the MRT-7 has submitted today a letter of withdrawal from the Swiss challenge," Castañares said. "Because of that, DOTC will now have to go back to ICC for the approval of the concession agreement."

New Kanlaon—owned by businessman Antonio Evangelista, who secured the P2.8-billion Erap City project in Rodriguez, Rizal—did not say why it pulled out of the bidding.

But sources familiar with the process say it may have been discouraged by the government's stand on requiring all interested parties to set up a bid bond of at least $100 million.

The bid bond was put up to discourage nuisance bidders and those whose sole intention is to sell the rights to the project to a real investor once they've secured the government's approval.

The government uses Swiss challenge rules as a basis for obtaining competitive bids for "unsolicited" projects like MRT-7.

Under the scheme, the government must give the original project proponent—in this case, the Universal MRT Corp. consortium led by Israeli businessman Eli Levin—the right to improve its initial offer, matching the best offer of an opposing bidder.

Nonetheless, Castañares said the final go-signal must come from the Cabinet-level Investment Coordination Committee of the National Economic and Development Authority, which acts as the clearing house for all big-ticket infrastructure projects of the government.

The transportation department official stressed that the government is fully committed to the project, despite recent developments.

The entire MRT-7 project is conservatively valued at $1.2 billion.

Republic of the Philippines
Municipality of Llorente
Province of Eastern Samar

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: July 4, 2006
Contract ID No SP-090-IN-01
World Bank Loan N° 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the **Rehabilitation & Construction of Public Market**. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits*.
2. The City / Municipality of Llorente invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the **Rehabilitation and Construction of 850 sq.m. one storey public market with support facilities; Reservoir & Site Development**.
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting **July 4, 2006** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at **BAC Secretariat, MPDO, Municipality of Llorente, Eastern Samar** upon payment of a non refundable fee of Six Thousand Five Hundred Pesos **(Php 6,500.00)** or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of **ninety (90)** days after bid opening and must be accompanied by bid security of Two Hundred Ten- thousand Pesos **(Php 210,000.00)** in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency and shall be delivered to the **BAC Secretariat, MPDO, Municipality of Llorente, Eastern Samar** on or before **10:00 a.m., August 2, 2006** at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. A pre-bid conference will be held at **10:00 a.m., July 19, 2006** at the **SB Session Hall, Municipality of Llorente, Eastern Samar.**

(Sgd.) ENGR. DOMINGO B. CORRAL
BAC Chairman

(PDI—July 4, 2006)

BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol
Fax No. (038) 508-8095, Tel No. (038) 508-0084, 508-0085

INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 2006-04

The **BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (BOHECO-I)** thru 5% reinvestment and general fund intends to procure various electrical materials and equipment to be used in our coverage area.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION "ANNEX A"

LOT I - VOLTAGE REGULATOR with By-Pass Arrestor (REFURBISHED) - 6 Units
- Rating 167 KVA

LOT 2 - VOLTAGE REGULATOR with By-Pass Arrester (REFURBISHED) - 6 Units
- Rating 114.3 KVA

LOT 3 - BY-PASS SWITCH for VOLTAGE REGULATOR, SURPLUS - 4 sets (12 Pcs)
13.2 KV Complete with Connectors

Sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the above-mentioned materials will be received by **BOHECO-I** at its main office in Maca-as Tubigon, Bohol on or before July 13, 2006 at 2:30 p.m. at which time and place said proposal would be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their respresentatives.

The interested bidders may obtain information, secure list of bidding documents from **BOHECO-I** Main Office upon payment of a non refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (Php2,000.00).

(Sgd.) CARLOS B. ITABLE
General Manager

(PDI—July 4, 2006)

ONLINE

www.henrybutcher.com

On the instruction of Premiere Printing Co., Inc.

ONLINE AUCTION SALE

High Quality Printing Equipment

Sale Closing: Thursday, 13th July 2006 at 20:00CCT (local time)

At: Premiere Printing Co., Inc. - #18, 1st Avenue,
Bagumbayan, Taguig, M.M.
Inspection: Monday 3rd - Thursday 13th July 2006
from 9am to 5pm or earlier by appointment

PRINTING - HEIDELBERG Speedmaster SM74-H (2000), HEIDELBERG MOV CP Tronic (1995) Reconditioned by HEIDELBERG (2006), (2) HEIDELBERG SM102 VCP Tronic (1989/1990) Four Color Printers; HEIDELBERG Speedmaster SM102 VCP Tronic Five Color Printer; HEIDELBERG SORS Single Color Printer (1984); HEIDELBERG KORD Single Color Printer (1986) (converted to UV Drying); HEIDELBERG Single Color Offset Printer (converted to Die Cutter)
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CUTTING - POLAR 115EM; (2) CHUNG TA SNL 115 CNC Paper Guillotines (1996), SHUNG FA Automatic Flaten Die Cut Machine (2001); TANG YUN TY 200 Electronic Hole Punch System; Manual Board Cutting Machine
BINDING/STITCHING - MULLER-MARTINI Type 1509 6 Station Saddle Stitcher (1990); MULLER-MARTINI Pony 5 Type 246 Perfect Binder; YOSHINO 16 Station Binding Line c/w Gathering, Perfect Binding, 3 Knife Trimmer
FILM PROCESSING - DAINIPPON-SCREEN Companica 680C Camera; NORSCREEN MS25-S-N289 (2002); NORSCREEN MS25S Film Processors; (2) HEXMAN Plate Makers
MISCELLANEOUS - GRETAG D19C 47B/P Reflection Densitometer; TECHKON T120 Densitometer

ONLINE AUCTION SALE

Telephone Card Pin Coding & Packaging Machinery

Sale Closing: Thursday, 13th July 2006 at 20:00CCT (local time)

At: Premiere Printing Co., Inc. - #18, 1st Avenue,
Bagumbayan, Taguig, M.M.
Inspection: Monday 3rd - Thursday 13th July 2006
from 9am to 5pm or earlier by appointment

METRONIC UDA 150S Type MT 471705-5013 Pin Coding Machine (2002);
KORA PACKMAT VMC 100 Card Packing Machine (2002)

For further information please contact Chris Major at
Tel: 852 2910 / 11 Email: chris.major@henrybutcher.com

GoIndustry Henry Butcher

HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILS. INC.
Rm. 102 Jolliland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City
Tel No.: 852 2910/11 or 854 4917-19 Fax No.: 831 9507
E-mail:manila@henrybutcher.com

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNOC The Energy Company

Merrit Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO. Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category B/AAC Medium, Sub-Category A, General Engineering or General Building to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

CIVIL, STRUCTURAL AND MECHANICAL/PIPING WORKS FOR THE CONVERSION OF TONGONAN REINJECTION TO PRODUCTION WELL (1R4)
(LEYTE GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD)
EDC 06-095

The Approved Budget is **P8,451,910.00** chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 120 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o M. C. Uribe) starting **July 4, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00).

Site inspection shall be conducted on **July 13, 2006, 10:00 A.M.** at the Leyte Geothermal Production Field (LGPF). For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **July 17, 2006, 2:00 P.M.** at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st floor Bldg. 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on August 1, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--July 4, 2006)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNOC The Energy Company

Energy Complex, Merrit Road
Fort Bonifacio, Makati City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5288

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Gas Chromatograph under FGM 60311
Approved Budget: PHP 3,496,300.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Mr. Anthony E. Ciriaco** starting **July 4, 2006**, and upon payments of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **July 13, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock time)** of **July 27, 2006**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--July 4 & 11, 2006)

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Republic of the Philippines
Municipality of Placer
Community-Based Resource Management Project (CBRMP)

Invitation for Bids

Date: July 4, 2006
Loan No. 4299-PH
IFB No. SFF-IPB-02-2005

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (through the Department of Finance (DOF) has received a loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in various currencies towards the financing of Community-Based Resource Management Project (CBRMP). It is intended that the part of the proceeds of this loan will applied to eligible payments under the contract for **Supply and Installation of Ice Plant Machineries.**
2. The Municipality of Placer now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the **Supply and Installation of Ice Plant Machineries.**
3. Interested eligible bidders may purchase or inspect the bidding documents at or obtain further information from the **Office of BAC Chairman, Municipal Hall, Placer, Surigao del Norte, Philippines.**
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting **July 4, 2006 - August 18, 2006** upon submission of letter of intent to the above and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 3,500.00)**
5. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and in the General Conditions of Contract are the provisions of the World Bank *Standard Bidding Documents: Procurement of Goods.*
6. Bids must be delivered to the **BAC Chairman, Municipality of Placer**, on or before **2:00 pm** on **August 18, 2006** and must be accompanied by a bid security in the amount of **Three Hundred Thousand Pesos** (Php 300,000.00) in the form of cash, manager's check or bank guarantee.
7. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend on **August 18, 2006; 2:00 p.m.** at **BAC Chairman, Municipality of Placer, Surigao del Norte, Philippines.**
8. Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on **July 28, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the address indicated in paragraph 7.

(Sgd.) **MRS. EMERITA P. ELAJAS**
Chairman, Bids Awards Committee

(PDI--July 4, 2006)

OBITUARIES

> *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*
> *He makes me lie down in green pastures.*
> *He leads me beside quiet waters.*
> *He restores my soul*
>
> Psalm 23:1-3

Our Dearly Beloved

Rodolfo "Rod" Locsin Jocson, MD, FPCS

Past District Governor, RI District 3850
Past Regent, Philippine College of Surgeons
Past Medical Director, The Doctors Hospital, Inc.

Peacefully joined his Creator on June 30, 2006 at the age of 83.

His bereaved children: **Ricardo & Milagros, Rodolfo Jr. & Jocelyn, Maria Asuncion & John Poon, Ramon & Georgina, Rafael & Emily**; grandchildren **Ricardo Jr., Rodrigo Miguel, Carmelita, Bettina Regina, Joaquin Ramon, Enrique Miguel, Emilie Marie** and **Rafael Emilio** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Rolling Hills Memorial Chapel, Bacolod City. Daily masses will be held at 6:00 p.m.

Interment will be tomorrow, July 5, 2006 at the Bacolod Memorial Park following the 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass at the Redemptorist Church, Bacolod City.

OBITUARIES

Death Notice

ANTONIO PACLIJAN GOLEZ
June 13, 1935 – July 2, 2006
Died in the grace of our Lord
at the age of 73.
His remains lie in state at the Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City
Interment will be on Saturday, July 8, 2006, at the Manila Memorial Park.

MARIA CLARA MAKABENTA
June 29, 1909 – July 2, 2006
Interment will be on Thursday, July 6, 2006, after the 8:30 a.m. Funeral Mass.

ARTURO DAVID
Died on July 1, 2006 at the age of 56.
Interment will be on Thursday, July 6, 2006, at the Manila Memorial Park-Sucat.

FRANCISCO CUSTODIO
Died on July 1, 2006 at the age of 31.
Interment will be on Thursday, July 6, 2006, at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos. Quezon City : 712-3001 • 743-6502
Manila : 711-6931 to 35

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
ROMEO I. CRUZ	Chapel C-14, Q.C.	07/05/06	to be announced
ARTURO G. DAVID	Chapel A-1, Q.C.	07/06/06; 9:00 a.m.	Mla. Mem. Park, Parañaque City
RICARDO LIWANAG	Chapel B-8, Q.C.	7/6/2006, after the 7:30 a.m. Mass	Concepcion Catholic Cemetery, Concepcion Tarlac

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More Classified Ads . . .

Department of Agrarian Reform
.... Notice of Coverage
Department of Health - Bicol Medical Center
.... Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Bohol I Electric Cooperative
.... Invitation for Bids
Municipality of Llorente
.... Invitation for Bids

on Page B-4

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

A. JUDITH LUCIANO LEDESMA

(October 28, 1947 -- June 22, 2006)

express our deepest appreciation to all our friends and relatives for your spontaneous outpouring of love, sympathy and support with the loss of our dearest mother, daughter, and sister.

She will live on in our hearts, and we find strength in knowing that she touched so many lives and organizations in her concern for others.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."— 2 Corinthians 5:4-5

BUSINESS

RP moves to plug terror's finance pipeline

Banks seen playing significant role in campaign

By Doris C. Dumlao and Christine O. Avendaño

TETANGCO

CONGRESS IS HAMMERING out a measure that will block efforts to finance international terrorists and curb the laundering of dirty money.

This developed as countries in the Asia-Pacific were urged to tighten laws governing the informal remittance system, wire transfers, cash couriers—and even the conduct of non-government organizations (NGOs)—to prevent funds from falling in the hands of terrorists.

The implementation of global standards to stem the flow of terrorist funding was among the issues discussed yesterday during the start of the 9th annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering.

During a ceremony opening the five-day meeting hosted by the Philippines, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced that she had certified as urgent a bill that would plug the financial pipeline for terrorism.

The President said that the country had achieved so much since it enacted the Anti-Money Laundering Act in 2001 and these included the freezing of P1 billion in suspected dirty funds and other criminally-tainted assets by the Anti Money Laundering Council (AMLAC) and the release of close to P800 million to victims of swindling or fraud.

"And the recent conviction of money launderers, one a criminal conviction and three forefeiture of the laundered assets, proves that our system works," Ms Arroyo said.

And to "supplement" these achievements, President Arroyo reiterated her government's bid to pass soon an anti-terror law "which will criminalize not only terrorism but its financing as well."

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday told reporters that it was important to strengthen the framework that would block the terrorists' financing."

The proposed law will require banks to play a more significant role in cutting off the financial pipeline of terrorism. The Anti-Money Laundering Council, which is chaired by the BSP, shall draft the implementing rules and regulations.

"We'll ask the banks to comply as soon as the law is passed," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said.

Aside from the United States, which is spearheading efforts to counter terrorists' financing initiatives, other Asian countries like Malaysia and Singapore have taken steps to strengthen their own regulatory framework, Espenilla said.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the proposed "anti-terrorist financing law" was as important as the other measures on money laundering and corruption.

"In the end, [the anti-terrorist financing measure] represents the sum total of all these efforts," Teves said. "An example is very important, for it to become a deterrent. This will eventually have to be manifested in the form of convictions.

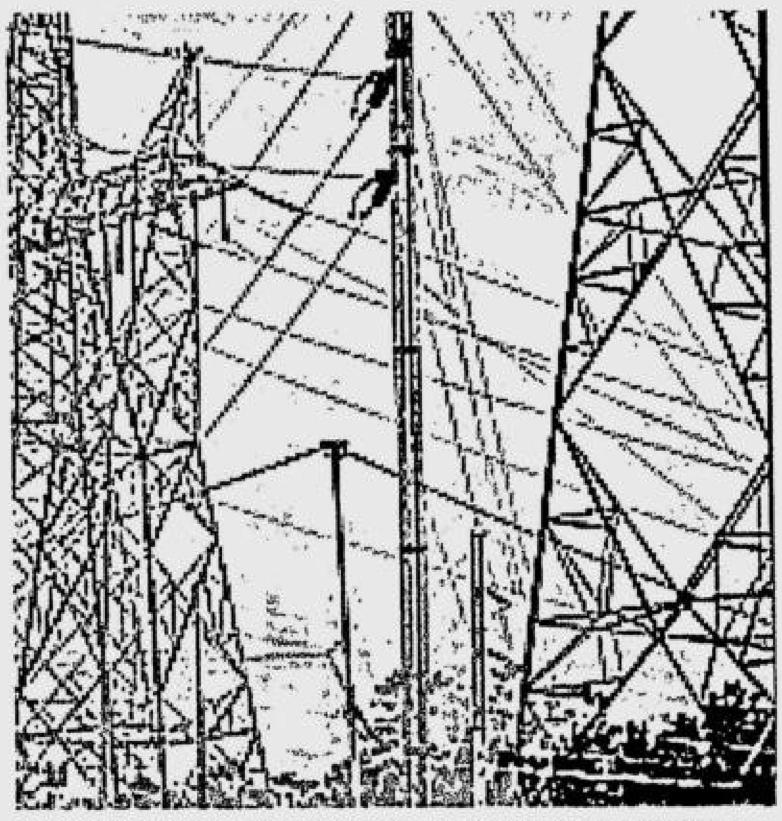
As early as 2002, the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force against money laundering has adopted global anti-terrorist financing standards, calling on all countries to render as criminal the financing of terrorism and associated money laundering, freeze and confiscate terrorist assets, and report suspected terrorist transactions.

"NGOs are particularly vulnerable, and countries should ensure that they cannot be misused for terrorist purposes," an APG briefing paper said.

Asia-Pacific countries were likewise urged to put in place measures to "detect the physical cross-border transportation of currency and bearer-eligible negotiable instruments, including a declaration system or disclosure obligation."

Money laundering is the act of conversting, transferring or concealing cash and other property derived from criminal activities, giving it the appearance of coming from a legitimate source.

The APG said that money laundering has the potential to impede economic growth and undermine the stability of financial systems.



LUZON grid was the biggest contributor accounting for P28 billion.

Napocor sales up 25%

By Abigail L. Ho

NATIONAL POWER CORP. GENERated P36.48 billion in energy sales in the first quarter of the year, up 25.26 percent from P29.13 billion in the same period last year.

Napocor's sales and services group said in a report that the Luzon grid still accounted for the bulk of energy sales in the first three months of the year, contributing P28.17 billion to total sales during the period. This represented a 25.89-percent growth from year-ago's P22.38 billion.

The Mindanao grid was a far second with a contribution of P4.48 billion, up from P3.59 billion last year. The Visayas grid added another P3.83 billion to Napocor's coffers, higher than last year's contribution of P3.16 billion.

According to the report, Napocor's higher revenue in the January-March period could be attributed to the 6.33-percent growth in sales volume, as well as to the Energy Regulatory Commission-approved rate increase which was effected since last year.

In terms of volume, the state firm's energy sales grew to 8,672.57 gigawatt-hours (GWh) in the first three months of the year from 8,156.36 GWh in the same period in 2005.

Napocor said a significant increase in the sales of the Luzon grid, which accounted for almost 70 percent of the state firm's total market, boosted the agency's sales performance..

Sales in Luzon rose 7.04 percent to 5,878.17 GWh from 5,491.61 GWh, due mainly to increased sales to the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co., Napocor's single-biggest customer.

Meralco bought 9.24 percent more electricity from Napocor in the first three months to 3,435.75 GWh from 3,145.04 GWh in 2005.

Sales to other distributors, industrial estates and economic zones also helped improve the performance of the Luzon grid.

While contributing the least in terms of revenue and volume, the Visayas grid registered the highest year-on-year sales growth among the three main grids.

Visayas power sales rose 11.76 percent to 1,158.05 GWh in the first quarter from 1,036.21 GWh a year ago, "a clear indication that (Visayas') economy is improving.

Ayala expanding Cebu mall, other projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez and Irene Sino Cruz

CEBU HOLDINGS INC., A 47-PERCENT owned subsidiary of Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), is earmarking P1 billion for major residential and retail development projects in Cebu in the next three years, ALI's vice-president and chief operating officer for Visayas and Mindanao Francis Monera said.

Monera told reporters in Cebu on Saturday that a substantial portion of the amount would go to the expansion of the Ayala Center mall in Cebu and its development into a "Greenbelt-type lifestyle mall."

The ALI group will spend roughly P800 million for the expansion of the mall area over the next three years. The project involves the construction of a five-level building, which will be the first phase of the plan, and the development of a nearby lagoon into a lifestyle-oriented shopping and dining area. The new building will add 6,000 square meters to the group's total gross leasable area in Cebu. Rustan's Supermarket—which will occupy 2,000 square meters in the expanded area of the mall—will be the anchor tenant.

CHI president and CEO Rene Almendras said the company would spend P300 million for the new building, which would be completed in the first half of 2007. He said the building would neable Ayala Center Cebu to cater to the requirements of shoppers, whether locals or foreigners.

"We see a lot of opportunities. We are capturing these opportunities by putting up the new building," Almendras said.

Almendras said the company was targeting mainly the tourist market. "Ayala Cebu has more tourists per square meter than in any other Ayala mall."

Its ability to respond to the changing market demands made Ayala Center Cebu among the preferred destinations in southern Philippines, he added.

CHI also launched during the weekend its first lighthouse community , dubbed "Amara" after the Spanish word for mooring rope or anchor.

Amara, a joint development project of CHI and Coastal Highpoint Ventures Inc., sits on a 46-hectare property at Barangay Catarman, Liloan, Cebu.

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CHALLENGING MALAYSIA'S DOMINANCE

Industry targets senior, long-stay tourists

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A NEWLY FORMED BUSINESS group yesterday signed seven pacts with various government agencies to drum up support for a private sector-led effort aimed at challenging Malaysia's dominance as a favored destination for senior and long-stay tourists in the region.

Also, Philippine Retirement Inc.—made up of companies engaged in real estate and subdivision development, medicine, and hospital and medical facilities operations—was formally launched during the 1st Philippine Retirement Industry and Investment Summit held at the Makati Shangri-la Hotel.

The summit was held in cooperation with the Philippine Retirement Authority, with which PRI is working closely in developing the sector.

The MOAs firmed up were mostly aimed at facilitating businesses in the sector—including one that PRI and PRA signed with the Trade and Investment Corp. and two others signed by PRA with Maybank and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Summit chair Noel Gonzales said the MOA with Peza would make it possible for retirement development projects to be declared special economic zones, which would entitle developers to various incentives.

There were also MOAs with the Department of Interior and Local Governments, as well as with the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines—both aimed at improving the peace and order situation within and around retirement zones.

A memorandum of cooperation and understanding was also signed with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. This seeks to ensure proper training in skills that the industry would need, including those in care giving, languages and understanding of various cultures.

Also signed was a MOA with the Manila International Airport Authority which provides for the setting up of specific operations for arriving retirees at major airports in the country.

Gonzales said the industry had resolved to "be as effective as Malaysia is by 2009." It also aims at bringing in 20,000 retirees and contributing $1.3 billion in foreign exchange receipts during the period.

He said that by 2014, the industry was hoping to register half a million long-stay arrivals with $11 billion in earnings.

"Within the next decade, we hope to have caused the inflow of a total of some $44 billion in earnings and the creation of some 4 million new jobs," Gonzales said.

"Perhaps this industry would provide so many jobs to doctors, nurses, caregivers and lifestyle service providers that it would actually cause 'reverse migration,'" he added.

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See backpage, main section

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ICTSI borrows P4.5B

INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER Terminal Services Inc. has borrowed P4.5 billion from a consortium of local and foreign banks to fund its expansion and refinance maturing debt.

ICTSI said the amount was raised through the issuance of floating rate notes marketed by the local unit of Standard Chartered Bank.

"This will finance [our] capital expenditure program at the Manila International Container Terminal, and refinance existing debt obligations," the company's chief financial advisor Martin O'Neill said in the statement. "ICTSI is a successful, rapidly growing international company with strong roots in the Philippines."

The notes were met with "strong demand" from institutional investors in the Philippines. *Daxim L. Lucas*

Pre-need sales down 5.8%

SALES OF PRE-NEED COMPAnies dropped by 5.78 percent to P1.4 billion in May from P1.5 billion in the same month last year.

This was an improvement from the sharp decline in sales of pre-need insurance in the previous months.

For the first five months of the year, pre-need sales fell 26.5 percent to P7.82 billion, from P10.6 billion in the same period last year.

Sales of life plans posted the biggest decline of 49 percent during the five-month period to P1.1 billion. Education plans also fell 46.5 percent to P1.78 billion in the same period. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

LIFESTYLE
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◉ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◉ WEDNESDAY **2BU** ◉ THURSDAY **FOOD** ◉ FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Emotions are messages

"We should not let fears hold us back from pursuing our hopes."—John F. Kennedy

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

SOMETIMES WHAT WE need badly comes when we acknowledge the need for humility.

Take the case of Francis who, at age 58, was feeling lost. He did not feel complete. He felt as though he was missing a big chunk of his life but didn't know what it was.

And so, in an act of surrender, he simply broke down one quiet moment, saying to himself "I am empty and must feel whole again."

Instead of turning to alcohol, his usual habit, or go out of town with the boys, he sat on his favorite swivel chair and was still. For the first time, the newfound silence spoke to him. It actually had a voice.

The next day, a friend sent him a book about borderline alcoholics. He read it and felt it was the right gift at the right time.

The heart speaks

According to Gary Zukav, every emotion is a message. In his book "The Heart of the Soul," he writes, "Your emotions are the best of friends. They do not leave you. They continually bring to your attention what you need to know."

But what is the interpretation? The message is whatever it is you need to know at that time. And your job is simply to listen.

Whether you pay attention to them or not, these emotions (anger, jealousy, bitterness, hurt, joy, happiness, etc.) will always repeat themselves and revisit you time and again until you listen.

Emotions are authentically yours. No priest, counselor or parent can interpret them for you. Only you can do that, simply because they are the rhyme and rhythm of a song meant only for you.

Should you ignore them, they will always return to remind, nag or haunt you. Should you pay attention to them, then the learning begins.

Emotional plan

All emotions manifest themselves physically. If repressed, they can attack your heart, liver, kidneys, lungs or whatever is most vulnerable. Worse, they can hinder your immune system's ability to deal with the daily onslaught of stress, viruses, bacteria, pollutants.

As a result, you can experience frequent palpitations, migraine, hypertension, indigestion, constipation, chronic pain… because of repressed emotions.

Decision to change

Transformation can only come when emotions are processed. Rid of fear and doubt—emotions are a good thing if love and trust are their by-products.

By recognizing your dreams, fantasies, sexual attractions, cravings, frustrations, desperation, you are processing information and gaining mastery over them. Decisions resulting from this careful process produce wisdom. This is when you can achieve mastery.

Remember: "Each decision is a moment of creativity."

Stay connected

Just as our souls reach out to heaven, our bodies are connected to the earth. Try this exercise:

Lie down on the grass, carpet, floor, or sandy beach. Take a few minutes to appreciate the earth. Close your eyes. Keep still. Feel your body supported by the ground. Entrust yourself completely to the feeling of groundedness the earth provides.

Remember the next time you feel that you are losing control, remember how grounded you are and, no matter what, the earth supports you.

Helpful guidelines

Listen to life. There is always guidance through symbols—a book, an encounter, a signage with a message.

Trust your mind. Open your heart.

Be a student again. Welcome the lessons you hope to learn each day.

Decisions and changes are up to you.

Act on your feelings with wisdom.

When overcome by uncertainty, terror or panic, get out and catch the sunrise or the sunset, walk into a forest park, enjoy a waterfall or sit against a tree. The beauty of nature will most certainty speak to you, as your heart does, that "life is good."

Love and light!

Watch "The Good Life" on Studio 23, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Sunday. Text CQ to 2966 (Smart) for your health and beauty updates.

Listen to dzMM (ABS-CBN Radyo Patrol 630) "Ma Beauty Po Naman," 6:15 p.m.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Preventing golf injuries

Part 2: Joint by joint

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

I AM FAMILIAR WITH GOLF INJURIES, NOT because I play golf but because I am a golf widow.

I have seen acute injuries. We once had to take a friend to the emergency room after pulling both his calf muscles from trying to jump out of the high side of a sand bunker. Probably out of frustration for being down there for so long.

I have seen chronic injuries like the plantar fasciitis my husband suffers on his left foot for not being able to shift his weight properly because of an old soccer injury on his right knee.

Golf may not look as athletic as basketball or badminton but it has its fair share of injuries. A German study found that 80 percent of injuries were due to overuse and 17 percent due to trauma or accidents (like getting hit on the head with a ball).

Professional golfers in the study had an average of three injuries a year (usually due to overuse) while amateurs had two injuries a year (usually due to bad technique and poor fitness levels).

Professional golfers were most likely to injure their wrist, hand, neck and shoulders while amateur golfers tended to hurt their elbows and lower back.

Those who warmed up for 10 minutes or less reported at least one injury per player while those who warmed up for more than 10 minutes reported 0.4 injuries per player.

Using a cart or caddie to carry the golf bag cut down significantly injuries to the lower back, shoulder and ankle, the study found. Unfortunately, playing four or more rounds of golf per week increased the risk of injury significantly.

Here's a brief overview of the most common golf injuries:

Elbows

This is the site of the most common injury among amateur golfers. Pain on the outside part of the elbow (called tennis elbow) is usually due to overuse, a grip that is too tight, inappropriate grip size, a lead arm that is too straight, and repetitive contractions in the forearm muscle to maintain control of the club during impact.

Pain on the inside part of the elbow (called golf elbow) most likely results from always hitting the ground during a swing. The impact with the ground creates shock waves that are absorbed by the forearm muscles and elbow joint.

"Tennis elbow" is four times more common in golfers than "golf elbow."

To strengthen forearms, squeeze a tennis ball for five minutes at a time. Change swing mechanics so there is less impact on the forearms. Use more flexible shafts and club heads with larger sweet spots to reduce vibration. Use a counter-force forearm brace.

Wrist and hand

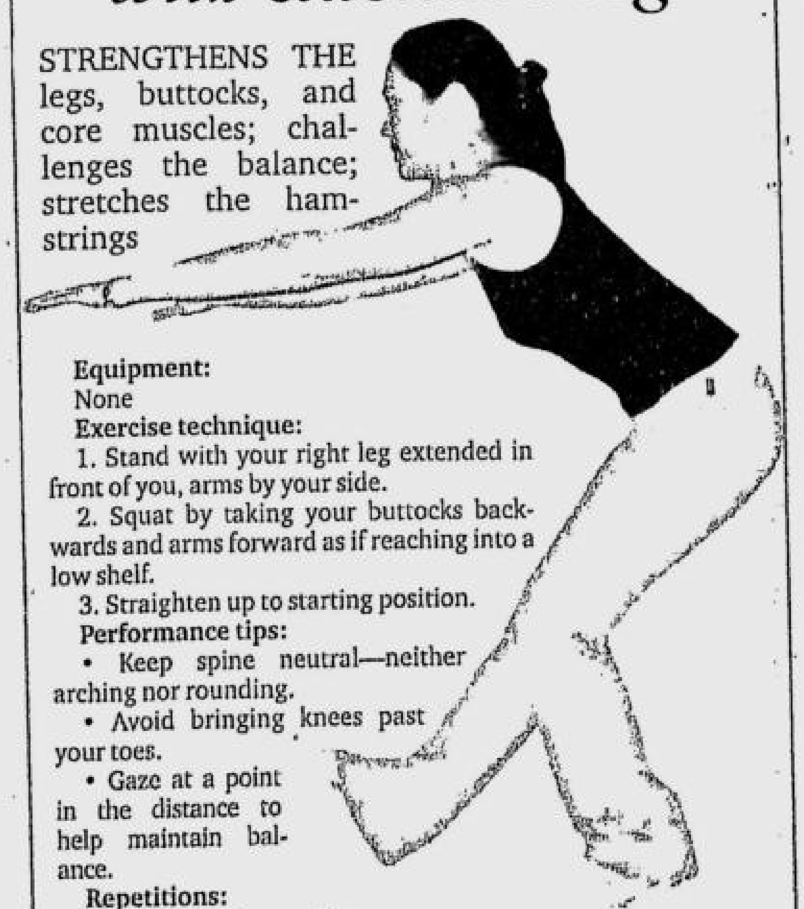
Right-handed golfers will usually have injuries in the left leading hand and wrist. Causes are poor wrist control, too tight a grip, poor swing technique, and overuse.

Tendonitis can develop in the right wrist of a right-handed golfer if he/she tends to hit the ground before hitting the ball, sending off

PREVENTING/ C2

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Reaching squat with extended leg



STRENGTHENS THE legs, buttocks, and core muscles; challenges the balance; stretches the hamstrings

Equipment:
None

Exercise technique:

1. Stand with your right leg extended in front of you, arms by your side.
2. Squat by taking your buttocks backwards and arms forward as if reaching into a low shelf.
3. Straighten up to starting position.

Performance tips:

- Keep spine neutral—neither arching nor rounding.
- Avoid bringing knees past your toes.
- Gaze at a point in the distance to help maintain balance.

Repetitions:
10-15 repetitions per leg

YOUR PROBLEM:
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Are you a right- or left-brain thinker?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Part I

THE HUMAN BRAIN IS PROBABLY the last organ we bother to learn about.

A car owner, for example, may know more about his vehicle than his brain. Even doctors don't bother much about how a patient uses his brain that may be contributing to his health problems.

Before the pioneering experiments by biologist Roger Sperry, scientists always considered the brain to be a single, integrated organ with different locations for different sensations and memory. Sperry proved this was not so.

After years of painstaking and meticulous research and experimentation, Sperry came up with the startling conclusion over 30 years ago that we had, in effect, two brains—the left neo-cortex and the right, each thinking in entirely different, even opposite, ways.

The left side of the brain, he discovered, was responsible for verbal, analytical and logical thinking. It was dominant or active when we were solving mathematical problems, engaged in technical writing or quantitative reasoning. It also thought in abstract symbols.

The right half of the brain was responsible for non-verbal thinking, such as intuition, creative, problem solving, imagination. It was responsible for synthesizing or seeing things as a whole and determining depth and perspective.

We are right-brain dominant when we make up stories imaginatively, or creatively, when we daydream or when we decide things intuitively.

Discovery

How Sperry discovered the different functions of the two hemispheres of the human brain reads like a detective story worthy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle of Sherlock Holmes fame.

Sperry was working on hopeless cases of epilepsy where drugs no longer had any effect. He hit upon the idea of making an incision in the *corpus callosum*, a part of the brain consisting of about 300 million brain cells and connected the left with the right part of the neo-cortex.

One of the functions of the *corpus callosum* is to act as a communication link between the two hemispheres of the brain.

When he made an incision in the corpus callosum, the epileptic patient recovered completely. Epileptic attacks or seizures ceased and, for all practical purposes, s/he was cured. The patient appeared to be normal and socially functional.

But Sperry noticed some changes in the personality of the so-called "split-brain" patients. For one thing, they could not express emotion verbally and they lost coordination of right and left hand movements.

After years of research, he discovered that the left half of the brain thought differently from the right half. For his accomplishment, Sperry received the Nobel Prize for Medicine, although he was not a physician but a biologist.

His discovery paved the way for a better understanding of how people thought and learned. It also explained the behavior patterns of people under different conditions.

Why, for example, are women, in general, better at details and people tasks compared to men who, in general, are better at abstract and analytical reasoning? He found it had something to do with how their brains were naturally wired and had nothing to do with race or genetics.

The popularity of Sperry's discovery also inspired many jokes about what eventually became popularly known as "the split-brain" theory.

One joke goes like this: "Two men sitting at a park. One reads a newspaper that says the left half of the brain is dominant in right-handed people, and the right half is dominant in left-handed people. That's why left-handed people are the only ones in their right minds."

Left brain-dominant people learn better if things are presented to them in a systematic, logical and orderly manner, preferably in writing. Right brain-dominant people learn better if things are demonstrated to them personally, where they can interact with the other person and ask questions.

Knowing the client

Sales and marketing people can improve their work and close more deals if they know the brain dominance of their prospective clients.

In selling a car to a left-brain person, the sales pitch should focus on the technical and scientific aspects of the car. If the client is right brain-dominant the salesman should emphasize how he looks in the car and how his friends will admire him. The appeal should be more to the emotions and imagination rather than to the abstract intellect.

There are many more practical applications of the split-brain theory than was at first realized by Sperry and his associates.

Next week: The Triune-brain Theory of Dr. Paul Maclean and the Whole-brain Theory of Ned Herrmann

Note: For those interested in joining my two-day Inner Mind Development seminar July 22-23 in Cagayan de Oro City, call 0917-7072948

Preventing golf injuries

From page C1

a large divot (chunk of turf).

A small bone at the base of the wrist on the small finger side can be fractured when a golfer performs a "fat shot" while hitting an immovable object like a rock, root of a tree, or the ground.

To prevent this injury that is often overlooked (it may not show on standard X-rays) and may require surgery, avoid obstacles and make sure the butt of the club extends past the palm of the leading hand.

Shoulders

Shoulder problems usually show up in the left shoulder of right-handed golfers. Overuse is the most common cause. Degenerative changes in the middle-aged shoulder joint also contribute to injuries. These changes may include a narrowing of joint spaces, thinning of the rotator cuff muscles, and bone spur formation.

Basic prevention tips are to avoid excessive repetitive trauma (translation: too much golf squeezed into too few days) and to strengthen/stretch the shoulder muscles including the rotator cuff.

Another important tip is to improve trunk rotation. It has been noted that golfers with poor range of motion in rotation may unconsciously compensate with their shoulders. Golfers with a history of back problems may do the same.

Knees

Although knee injuries are not common in golf, they can hobble golf greats. Tiger Woods underwent surgery to treat a chronic knee problem that developed from childhood injuries and, some say, from changing his swing.

Even if a golfer uses a cart, knees can be stressed from playing on undulating and hilly terrain, especially if the golfer "likes" to visit the rough.

The mechanics of the golf swing stresses the lead leg during the follow-through phase. This can lead to degeneration and tears in the menisci, cartilage that acts as shock absorber in the knee joint.

Overweight increases the risk of knee problems. Every pound of body weight is multiplied six times on the knee joint. Being 10 pounds overweight is the equivalent of 60 pounds of excess pressure on the knees.

Next week: Part three—The lower back and golf

Sources:
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
SportsMedicine.About.Com
Golf.About.Com
Golf Injury Review, Sports Injury Bulletin
Harvard Men's Health Watch

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Film on autism to be premiered July 22

THE FIRST LOCALLY PRODUCED feature-length digital film documentary on autism will have its benefit premiere showing 6 p.m., July 22, at the University of the Philippines Film Center Theater (Cine Adarna) in Diliman, QC. Presented by the Autism Society Philippines, "Alyana—A Study of Autism in the Philippines," will be one of the highlights of the National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week third week of July.

The film by independent filmmaker Mirana Medina about her grandniece Alyana, traces the history of autism in the Philippines. It depicts the plight and struggle of persons with autism, their families and those involved in their lives.

It gives information about autism, its possible causes, symptoms, implications and the importance of appropriate intervention.

Medina, a UP Film Center Scholar at the Film and Television Institute, Pune, India, is the first woman to receive the Gawad Urian Award for Best Film Editing.

In the Philippines, it is estimated that 250,000-300,000 Filipinos are autistic.

The film is produced by Miryad Cuts and Wacky O Production, in collaboration with Pagcor, Lingap-Pangarap Foundation, Inc., and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. The Legend Hotels International is the major sponsor of the preview and premiere.

Call Autism Society Philippines at 9266941 and 4368713 or e-mail info@autismphils.org/autism-phils@pacific.net.ph. Visit www.autismphils.org or go to Rm. 307 ML Building, 47 Kamias Road, QC.

the power
of protection

Age 1 is **the Discovery Stage.** Your child starts to walk and explore the world around him.
He needs protection now, more than ever, for him to discover the world and go further.

Women bone up on osteo

OVER 1,200 WOMEN FROM ALL OVER Metro Manila took part in Anlene's bone density test at the Glorietta as part of Anlene's campaign to prevent osteoporosis.

The "Glorietta Save Your Bones, Love Your Life Mega Bone Scan Event" was part of Anlene's thrust to educate women on bone health to prevent osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis or brittle bone results from inadequate calcium in the body. It can lead to fractures and bone deterioration.

Anlene was the first brand to mount a bone-scan marathon for free.

The event was attended by Elma Muros Posadas, champion runner; Asia's songbird Pilita Corrales; singer Pinky Marquez; dancer/choreographer Maribeth Bichara; and stage actress Pinky Amador.

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

What is CBC and Blood Typing?

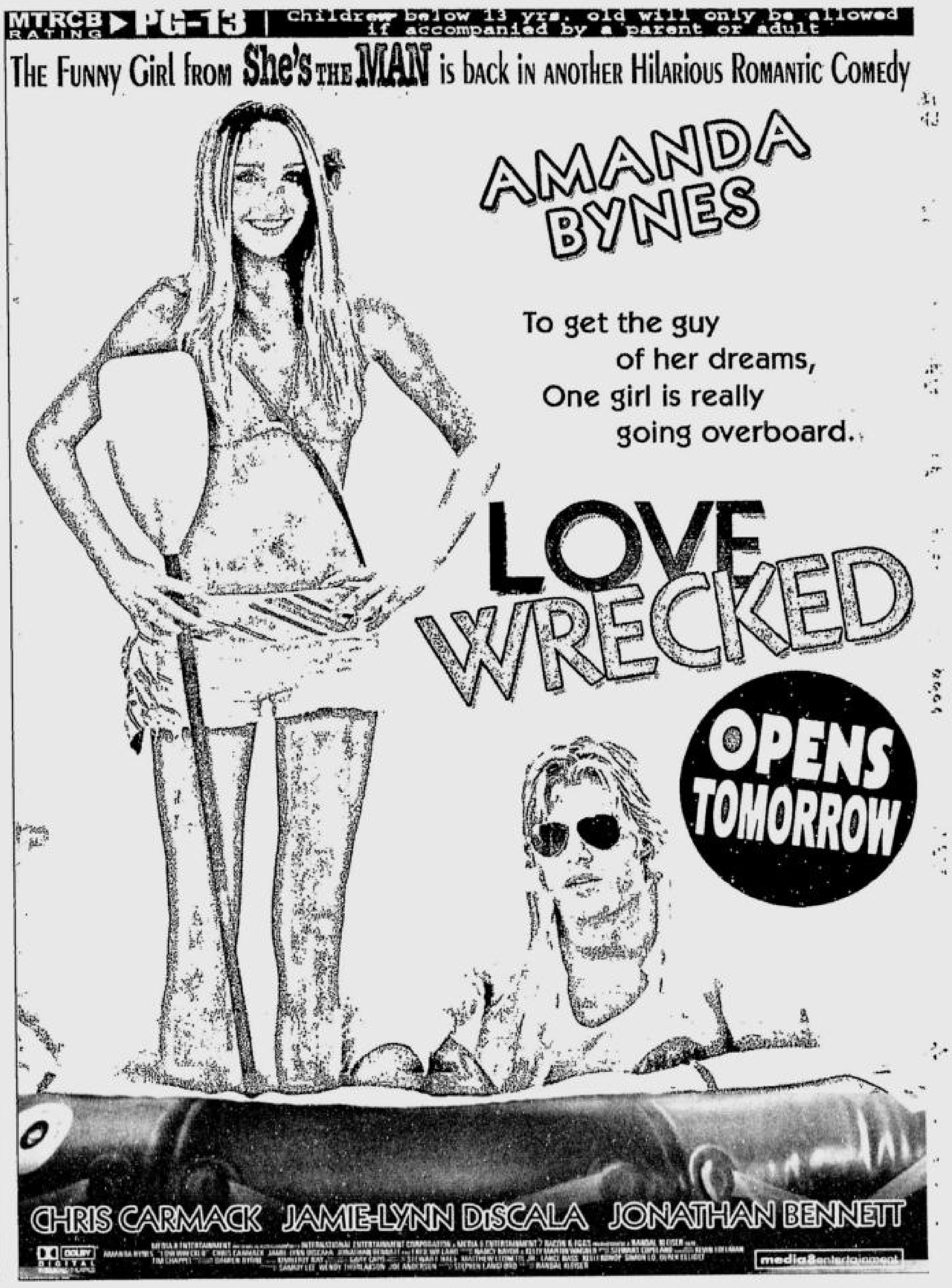
A complete blood count (CBC) is one of the most common laboratory tests performed worldwide and a powerful test when findings in the history and physical examination are suggestive of a blood abnormality. It quantifies the different cellular components of the blood of a patient, and these are red blood cells (RBC) and hemoglobin (Hgb), the white blood cells (WBC) and the platelets (plt). The normal range values of hemoglobin is between 13.5-17.5g/dL for males and 12.0-16.0g/dL for females. A value falling below the lower limit or a clinically significant value of 9.0g/dL defined as anemia. The Hgb is important to doctors because it helps them decide whether to recommend transfusion therapy and how many units of blood to transfuse. The rule of thumb is that every unit of RBC transfused will raise the Hgb level by 1.0g/dL. WBC count usually goes up when there is an active inflammatory process in the body, like an infection. While, platelets are essential for wound healing and the formation of clots in the bleeding sites. Blood typing is a vital piece of information that can potentially save a person's life especially during trauma or an accident. It is required whenever patients need to be tranfused blood or its components for treatment. There are many antigen systems (which determines the blood type of a person) present on RBC but the ABO and Rh system are the ones commonly tested.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Metro Manila. Dr. Melvin Marfega is specializes in Internal Medicine. He obtained his medicine proper at UP College of Medicine, Manila in 2001. He later took his residency training for Internal Medicine at Philippine General Hospital last year. He is a member of the Philippine College of Physicians. MEDICard members may visit him for consultation services at Protacio Hospital, Mondays to Sundays except Fridays from 8am to 4pm

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

MEDICard [illegible] Trunkline [illegible] Fax No. [illegible] Text: [illegible] MEDICARD [illegible] Mobile [illegible] (Smart & Talk N Text) [illegible] E-mail: inquiry@medicardphils.com Website: www.medicardphils.com


MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
The Funny Girl from She's the Man is back in another Hilarious Romantic Comedy
AMANDA BYNES
To get the guy
of her dreams,
One girl is really
going overboard.
LOVE WRECKED
OPENS TOMORROW
CHRIS CARMACK JAMIE-LYNN DiSCALA JONATHAN BENNETT
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Nestlé

Introducing new NIDO 1+
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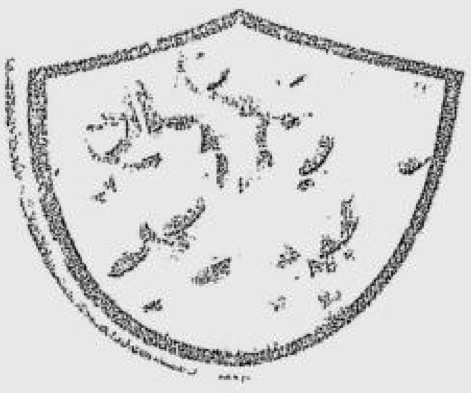
the latest innovation in milk nutrition

The 3-Point Revolution

Lactobacillus PROTECTUS

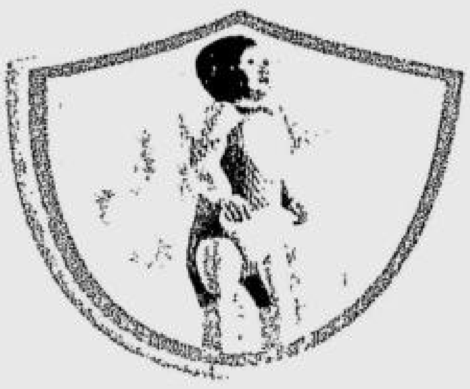
1 The Only Milk With Live Lactobacillus PROTECTUS™

NIDO 1+ is the first to introduce Lactobacillus PROTECTUS™ in a milk powder. It is a live microorganism that helps build your child's body defenses.



2 How It Works

Once NIDO 1+ is mixed with water, the Lactobacillus PROTECTUS™ multiplies by the millions and when consumed start to boost your child's immune system.



3 Active Protection And More!

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Continuous Drinking = Continuous Protection

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Nestlé
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3+
Protection Active Stimulation

STATUESQUE eye-catcher Malu Francisco of SSI and Summit Media key accounts specialist Junn de las Alas

RUSTAN'S Gladys Gonzales, Estée Lauder associate brand manager, and Rejoyce Siy, Estée Lauder brand assistant

JANINA Dizon, Roselle Cua and Ida Dizon of Nivea

GAY Lao of L'Oreal Paris, Jill Baysa and Dia Lacaba of Maybelline New York

NIKKI Tan and Tinette Lucero of Dermasia Corp.

The fairest of them all

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

COSMETIC SCIENCE IS NOW A major business, *palanggas*, so it's no wonder tons of invitees were all there, elbow to elbow, when that chic popular gal magazine Marie Claire honored the best of the best, the "nine finest cosmetic products in the world," when it hosted the Prix d'Excellence de la Beaute 2006, at excellent Le Soufflé, Rockwell Club.

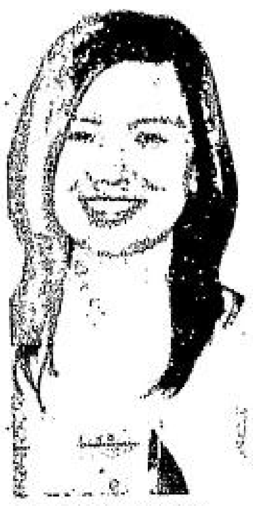
The award winners were: Liquid Bronze, by Clarins; Rouge Pure Shine, by Yves Saint Laurent; KissKiss, by Guerlain; Sensitive, by Nivea Visage; Platinum, by Lancôme; Dream Matte Mousse, by Maybelline; Volume Shocking, by L'Oreal Paris; and Eluage, by Avene. The shimmer brick compact by Bobbi Brown was the Philippine beauty jury's choice.

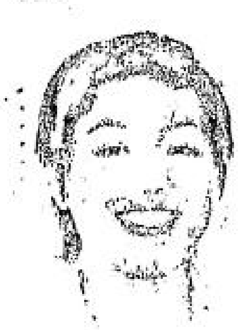
Marie Claire's brilliant editor in chief, statuesque eye-catcher **Myrza Sison**, gave a very brief but interesting welcome speech. Marie Claire's beauty, health and fitness editor, cyber smart fashion plate **Marie Calica**, presided over the awarding ceremony as president of the Philippine jury.

Accepting the awards were: **Claudine Santos** of Rustan Commercial Corp. for Clarins; **Audrey Canta** and **Sujee Isturis** of Rustan Marketing Corp. for YSL Parfums; **Samantha Yen** of Luxasia Inc. for Guerlain; **Rica King** of Beiersdorf Singapore Pte. Ltd. for Nivea Visage; **Zerline Chan** of L'Oreal Philippines for Lancome Paris; **Dia Lacaba** of L'Oreal Philippines for Maybelline New York; **Criscy Bautista** of L'Oreal Philippines for L'Oreal Paris; **Nikki Tan** of Dermasia Corp. for Avene; and **Imelda Lerma** of Rustan Commercial Corp. for Bobbi Brown.

Who were the jurors? Here they are: Preview beauty editor **Agoo Bengzon**; Cosmopolitan beauty editor **Mariel Chua**; and Good Housekeeping fashion and beauty editor **Myra Puyat-Santiago**; renowned makeup artist **Lala Flores**; and Philippine Dermatological Society fellow Dr. **Maria Lourdes Anna M. Nebrida**, *palanggas*.

The awarding was followed by a champagne toast led by Myrza. Marie Calica gave a free makeup demo using all the winning products.


SUJEE Isturis, for YSL


CLAUDINE Santos, for Clarins

RICA King of Beiersdorf

SAMANTHA Yen of Luxasia Inc., for Guerlain

MARIE Claire's Trisha Andres, Myrza Sison and Jenny Inumerable

Magazine launch

Moi did not miss the launch of a fab new mag for big boys who love big toys, Evo Magazine. Tons of car lovers rushed to the Polo Club where they were welcomed by Evo's execs, publisher **Kenneth Quintal**, executive editor **Jose Mari Ugarte**, and directors **Paolo Martel** and **Carl Cunanan**.

Manila Polo Club president **Rey Dempsey** and general manager **Patricia Puyat-Palanca** were fab hosts, *palanggas*.

Apres the adrenaline-pumping polo match, it was time to party with excellent champagne and a superbly prepared gastronomic feast. The event was sponsored by Prestige Cars BMW, Rustan's Essenses, Montblanc, Johnnie Walker, Samsung, San Mig's Super Dry and the Manila Sports Car Club.

Up for grabs were awesome prizes like Cartier clocks from Rustan's; Rustan's Essenses gift packs, Montblanc Chopin fountain pen, Montblanc Noblesse Oblige rollerball pens; miniature cars from Prestige Cars BMW; BMW caps; and Johnnie Walker Green Label scotch, natch.

Evo gave away fabulous raffle prizes: BMW caps, Rustan's Essenses gift packs, Montblanc Noblesse Oblige rollerball pens and luxurious gift bags from Rustan's.

Then it was time for those gorgeous big toys. High-performance vintage sports cars—followed by a fleet of contemporary sport cars—stole the show like the show-stopper 325-bhp Saleen S281 Mustang Coupe, the exotic Bordeaux-colored six-speed Ferrari 355 Berlinetta, and the gorgeous Neil Diamond pre-owned Ferrari 328 GTS, plus the Racing Red 1963 Jaguar E-type XKE 3.8 convertible; three mid-'60s V8 Corvette Stingray Convertibles, and a couple of hot-looking Mustangs, dahlings.

Life begins

I know many pals who would cringe at the thought of celebrating their 40th, *palanggas*. In fact, I know some who got depressed and cried. But that wasn't the case with entrepreneur and former member of the House of Representatives, perky and smart **Anna Marie Periquet**, who welcomed her 40th with a bang, inviting around 200 pals as she became our Queen for a Day.

Swinging Mezze at Greenbelt 2, the "in place" for ultra-sophisticated gatherings, was the hotspot for one of the most memorable celebrations in Anna's life.

Everyone Anna loves and who love her were there, dahlings—from her *famille* to her grade school and high school gangs from Assumption and University of the Philippines; colleagues from the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philippine Retailers' Association and Philippine Franchise Association; close friends from the Presidential Council for Youth Affairs, plus pals from Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

A highlight of the fun happening was the "Trip Down Memory Lane" slide show—from Anna's baptism in 1965, to her very own Anna Marie Home, involvement in Aurelio Periquet Jr. Foundation, PCCI, Gawad Kalinga.

COOKIE Nadal

SUMMIT Media publisher Lisa Gokongwei-Cheng

Tabletops had Zen fountains that were raffled off every 40 minutes. Winners included **Samie Lim**; the 40th guest in the guest book, **Ana de Villa**; all the Annas in the party; **Richard Agbayani**, the man with a 40-inch waistline; and **Albert Tan**, who was born on Nov. 14.

Sorry to report, **palanggas**, there was no woman with a 40-inch bust! Pity.

Needless to say, the bash wouldn't have been a smashing success without the magic of the man himself, **Bobong Velez**, Mezze's owner and the man behind the legendary Faces Disco. Bobong V, made sure that good ol' Faces music was played throughout the affair.

Hey, it was a totally awesome celebration. Pretty, smart, vivacious and cool Anna Marie Periquet, at 40, is just starting life, dahlings.

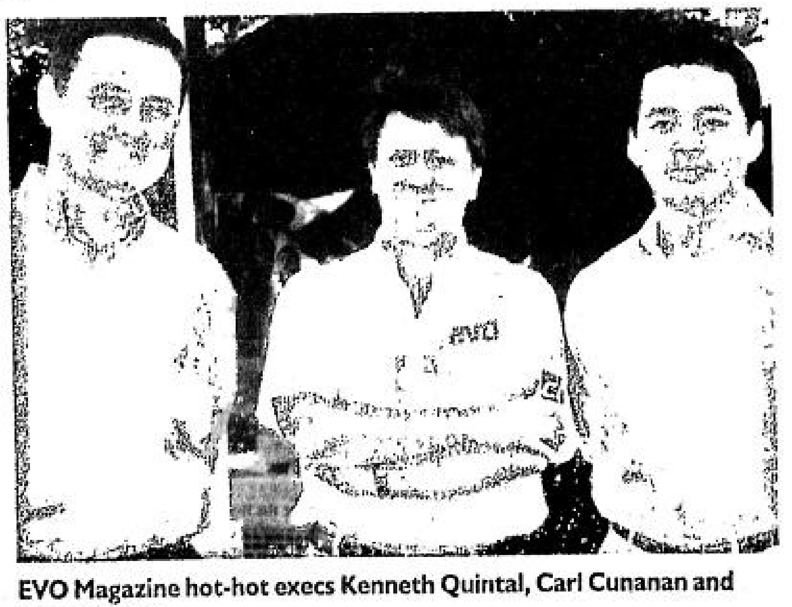
KELLY P. Gana, the celebrator, Daniella P. Gana and Ramon Gana

DTI Usec. Mel Alonzo

OFFIE Manalac Dee and Ambassador Donald Dee

SUPER pals (seated) Rica Tinsay Lustre, Angela Navato Javier, Tin Escalona Garcia and Deeda Garcia-Versoza; Teresa Paras-Goduco, Anna Marie Periquet, Ariane Licaros Dee, Judy Roman Antonio and Monique Banzon Daez

IAN Sermonia, Amaya Barretto, Bianca Zobel, Marinez Toda Delgado and fiancé Chukri Prieto, and Paolo Martel


EVO Magazine hot-hot execs Kenneth Quintal, Carl Cunanan and Paolo Martel

JAMES Deakin, Leanna Farrales of BMW Phils. and Charlie Carmona

MVP Dino Santos

PJ Castro, Patrick Reynoso, Henri Yatuc, Cat Arambulo and Blanca Zobel

MA. JUANA Mapua and Ixi Mapua.

ELSA Constantino and Manila Polo Club GM Patricia Puyat-Palanca

BEAUTIFUL couple: Ana and husband, Evo executive editor, business magnate Inaki Ugarte

CHRISTINE Limjoco with her two angels, Ashley and Audrey

MARTIN Lahm III, David Reynolds and Manila Polo Club president Rey Dempsey